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ABSTRACT

This guide offers a closer look at the newly-independent nation of Kyrgyzstan. The teaching materials focus on the history and culture of the nation, emphasize the influence of physical geography on culture, and explore the diversity found in this small country. Each lesson includes the geography standards linked to the activity, objectives, materials needed, background materials, procedure, extension activities and activity sheets. The activities are divided by grade level. Activities for grades 3-5 include: (1) "Where in the World is Kyrgyzstan?"; (2) "What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?"; (3) "Hats Here and There"; (4) "Who's a Nomad?"; and (5) "What's in a Name?" Activities for grades 6-9 focus on: (1) "Kyrgyzstan Identified"; (2) "Kyrgyzstan Up Close"; (3) "Understanding Characteristics of Kyrgyz Population"; (4) "Islam in Kyrgyzstan"; and (5) "Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan." Activities for grades 10-12 include: (1) "Kyrgyzstan's Transition from a Centrally-Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy"; (2) "The Manas Poem"; (3) "A History of Kyrgyzstan"; and (4) "Destination Kyrgyzstan." Maps and a 52-item resource list are also included in the booklet. A video tape accompanies the lessons. (EH)

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DESTINATION: KYRGYZSTAN

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About This Guide

"Destination: Kyrgyzstan" offers a close view of a newly-independent nation. The teaching materials, together with the accompanying video, will help students learn about the history and culture of this nation. These teaching materials will help students understand the influence of physical geography on culture, and will focus on the diversity found even in a relatively small country such as Kyrgyzstan.

The activities in the guide have been grouped into three academic levels: grades 3-5, grades 6-9, and grades 10-12. The six basic themes of geography serve as the fundamental organizing structure of the units. The themes and the national geography standards based on each are found on page 2 of this guide. Each activity is coded by number to the standards to which it best relates.

Each lesson in this study guide includes the following sections:

- **Geography Standards** list the specific standard that is addressed by the activity.
- **Objectives** identify the specific content or skills that students are expected to master.
- **Materials Needed** is a listing of the necessary classroom materials, activity sheets, handouts, or maps.
- **Background** provides teachers (and, in many cases, students) with the background information they need to understand the content presented in the lesson. Teachers may want to duplicate this material for students to read independently, perhaps as homework. They may also choose to present the information orally to the class.
- **Teaching This Lesson** gives step-by-step suggestions on turning the student activities into hands-on lessons for students.
- **Extension Activity** gives a specific idea for ways to extend and enrich the activities, as well as suggestions for relating the activities in this guide to the class' correspondence with its own Peace Corps Volunteer, whether he or she serves in Kyrgyzstan or in another country. In addition, many of the lessons include student activity sheets or reading assignments.
- **Activity Sheets** are provided with each lesson, and they are designated by this triangle. 

At each grade level, the guide includes lessons in each of the following areas:

1. Geography (these lessons always include a map)
2. Culture
3. Historical connections
4. Language arts

"Destination: Kyrgyzstan" is a flexible resource package. Activities at one grade level may be adapted for the needs and interests of different groups of students. Upper grade teachers may find the supplementary background information provided for the lower grades beneficial, and vice versa. Please use the table of contents on pg. V for a quick orientation to this guide.

Although this guide has been developed for use by teachers and students participating in the Peace Corps' World Wise Schools program, it may also be used by other teachers who wish to increase their students' understanding of the geography and culture of Kyrgyzstan. Classes participating in World Wise Schools will find that the study guide, like others in the "Destination" series, is designed to enrich students' correspondence with their Peace Corps Volunteer and to help them develop a deeper appreciation and respect for regions and cultures different from their own.

Most of all, this study guide is designed to help make teaching a little easier. **We at World Wise Schools are interested in your reactions to this guide, so please feel free to provide feedback.** What worked? What did not? What could make future guides even more useful? Please let us know.

Table of Contents

Information for Teachers

Peace Corps	1
National Geography Standards	2
Kyrgyzstan: An Overview	3

Activities: Grades 3 - 5

Where in the World is Kyrgyzstan?	9
What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?	14
Hats Here and There	18
Who's a Nomad?	20
What's in a Name?	24

Activities: Grades 6 - 9

Kyrgyzstan Identified	27
Kyrgyzstan Up Close	33
Understanding Characteristics of the Kyrgyz Population	37
Islam in Kyrgyzstan	41
Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan	45

Activities: Grades 10 - 12

Kyrgyzstan's Transition from a Centrally-Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy	49
The Manas Poem	54
A History of Kyrgyzstan	58
Destination Kyrgyzstan	63

Maps

Map 1 - The World Map	65
Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and its Neighbors	66
Map 3 - Roads and Railroads	67
Map 4 - Topographic Map	68
Map 5 - Economic Map	69
Venn Diagram	70

Resource List	71
---------------------	----

Acknowledgements	74
------------------------	----



The circular domed *yurta* (above) is the traditional dwelling of nomadic Kyrgyz people. It is a portable tent made of skins or felt, stretched over a collapsible lattice framework, with a hole in the roof (below) for ventilation and the release of smoke from cooking fires. This lattice framework creates a cross, which is symbolic of Kyrgyzstan's nomadic history and figures prominently in the Kyrgyz flag.





INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Peace Corps

Peace Corps was established when President John F. Kennedy issued an Executive Order on March 1, 1961. Since that time, Volunteers have dedicated two years of their lives in another culture to increase international understanding, and transfer valuable skills to the people of the country they are serving.

Peace Corps, seeking to promote world peace and friendship, has three goals:

- 1. To provide Volunteers who contribute to the social and economic development of interested countries;*
- 2. To promote a better understanding of Americans among the people whom Volunteers serve;*
- 3. To strengthen Americans' understanding about the world and its peoples - to bring the world home.*

Since the first group of Volunteers arrived in Ghana, West Africa, in 1961, over 145,000 U.S. citizens have joined the Peace Corps in more than 100 countries. Although programs vary from country to country based on the host nation's needs and requests, Volunteers traditionally offer skills in the areas of education, agriculture, small business development, community development, natural resources, and health. Recent program additions have included environmental education, water and sanitation, special education, and the development of programs aimed at improving the status of women and their families. Before placement at their sites, Volunteers receive training in the language and culture of their host countries, as well as in specific technical skills. Cross-cultural training, which includes the study of the history, customs, and values of the host country, prepares Volunteers to become part of a local community for the duration of their two year service.

By living and working within their local communities, Peace Corps Volunteers not only learn about the people of their host country, but also offer people around the world a chance to learn about the people of the United States.

Volunteers are also committed to carrying out the third goal of Peace Corps: teaching citizens of the United States about the people and cultures of their host countries. This goal is an essential component of Peace Corps' overall mission. World Wise Schools seeks to bring the world to U.S. students, to encourage the study of geography, to promote cultural awareness, and to illustrate the value of service. Through award-winning videos, study guides, correspondence with Volunteers, a web site, speakers bureau, and other materials, World Wise Schools brings the countries and cultures of the world into U.S. classrooms and helps lessons come to life through first-hand experience.

When Peace Corps Volunteers return from overseas, they bring an intimate knowledge of other peoples and cultures. They understand that the ability of the United States to function in the world community depends on its understanding of other cultures. They know that global interdependence is a reality, not just a catchword. When Volunteers share their experiences with their World Wise Schools classes, they help U.S. students to fashion a broader world view.

National Geography Standards

The geographically informed person knows and understands:

The World in Spatial Terms

- (1) How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and technologies to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective
- (2) How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context
- (3) How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on Earth's surface

Places and Regions

- (4) The physical and human characteristics of places
- (5) That people create regions to interpret Earth's complexity
- (6) How culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions

Physical Systems

- (7) The physical processes that shape the patterns of Earth's surface
- (8) The characteristics and spatial distribution of ecosystems on Earth's surface

Human Systems

- (9) The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface
- (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics
- (11) The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface
- (12) The processes, patterns, and functions of human settlement
- (13) How the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of Earth's surface

Environment and Society

- (14) How human actions modify the physical environment
- (15) How physical systems affect human systems
- (16) The changes that occur in the meaning, use, distribution, and importance of resources

The Uses of Geography

- (17) How to apply geography to interpret the past
- (18) How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future

(Source: Geography For Life: National Geography Standards, Geography Education Standards Project, 1994, National Geographic Research & Exploration.)

Kyrgyzstan: An Overview

"Kyrgyzstan is a newly-independent republic of the former Soviet Union, nestled in the Tian Shan mountains next to China and Kazakhstan. About five million people live here, a little over half of whom are ethnic Kyrgyz, a Turkic relative of the Mongols. The cities have a very distinct Soviet taste. But dotting the countryside are the same sheep herds and yurtas that Ghengis Khan's Mongol hordes saw as they rode through this land."

-Eric Boyle, Peace Corps Volunteer, 1993

The Land

Kyrgyzstan (pronounced "KEER-gih-stan") is a central Asian land that was formerly part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (U.S.S.R.). It became an independent nation in 1991 after the dissolution of the U.S.S.R. Kyrgyzstan is a small country, about the size of Minnesota. Yet within this small land area are several distinct and diverse cultures, from the Russian-influenced large city of Bishkek to the traditional nomadic lifestyle that is still prevalent in areas around the town of Naryn.

Kyrgyzstan's mountains not only are the country's most striking physical feature, but also are the explanation for how such diversity can be found in such a small country. Two mountain ranges, the Tian Shan (Chinese for "Heavenly Mountains") range in the northeast, and the Pamir-Alai range in the southwest, dominate Kyrgyzstan. Several mountain peaks are more than 19,000 feet (5,791 meters) high, and within the country's borders are two of the tallest mountains in the world. Kyrgyzstan's highest mountain, at 24,405 feet (7,439 meters), is Pik Pobeda ("po-BAY-deh" or Victory Peak), on the border with China. Not far away is Khan Tengri, 22,949 feet (6,995 meters). Locally, this section of the Tian Shan is known as the Muztag ("Ice Mountain"). About 90 percent of the land has an altitude of at least 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) above sea level.

The high mountains have made transportation and communication difficult. Not only have the Kyrgyz ("KEER-geez") been isolated from neighboring countries, but mountain valley communities within the country have tended to be isolated from one another. "Going to Osh," an essay (pg. 32) written by returned Peace Corps Volunteer Jack Hillmeyer included in this study guide, describes the modern-day results of this cultural isolation.

The high mountains also act to preserve traditional Kyrgyz culture. The country's first democratically elected president, Askar Akaev, wrote about the mountains in a 1994 essay entitled, "Kyrgyzstan on the Road to Democracy and Social Progress." "It was our mountains," Akaev said, "that shielded my people in times of trial, and quenched their thirst by thousands of their rivers and springs, provided them with food, and filled them with faith in their strength, wisdom, and love of fellow-men."

Kyrgyzstan is bordered by the People's Republic of China in the southeast, Kazakhstan ("KAH-zahk-stan") to the north, Tajikistan ("tah-ZHEEK-ih-stan") to the south, and Uzbekistan ("ooz-BEHK-ih-stan") to the west. The country's western border, established during the time the country was part of the U.S.S.R., allows both Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan to share some of the lowlands in the Fergana basin, whose fertile croplands are especially valuable in a country without much arable land.

The country is located on the same latitude as Baltimore, Maryland; Denver, Colorado; and Rome, Italy. Total land area is 76,640 square miles (198,497 square kilometers). High in the mountains is the country's largest body of water, Lake Issyk Kul ("EE-seek-cool"). At 113 miles (182 kilometers) long and 36 miles (58 kilometers) wide, Issyk Kul is the second-largest crater lake in the world. The name means "warm lake." Issyk Kul does not freeze in the winter even though it is nearly a mile (5,250 feet or 1.61 kilometers) above sea level.

Natural Resources and the Kyrgyz Economy

Kyrgyzstan is rich in energy sources. One of the country's most important natural resources is hydroelectric power. The country currently exports about 30 percent of the electricity it produces to China and other nearby countries. This generates both revenue and hard currency. However, to take full advantage of this natural resource, the country will need to develop a network of electric lines in complicated and mountainous terrain.¹ Important rivers include the Naryn, in the central region, and the Chu, which forms part of the border with Kazakhstan.

Kyrgyzstan is the site of the former U.S.S.R.'s largest and most productive gold mine, and the country also has significant deposits of rare strategic metals including cesium, yttrium, lanthanum, antimony, and mercury. Some experts believe that these minerals and metals may be the most promising sector of the Kyrgyz economy, but as is the case with virtually all of Kyrgyzstan's heavy industry, there is a need for significant investments to update machinery and equipment. The country has coal deposits and some oil reserves as well.

The economy is largely based on agriculture, and 65 percent of the population still lives in rural areas. Agriculture employs nearly one-third of the population and accounts for about 40 percent of Kyrgyzstan's economic production. The main crops are cotton, sugar beets, tobacco, and grains, which are cultivated in the irrigated valleys.

Livestock has been an important part of Kyrgyz life for centuries. More than 11 million sheep are raised by the nomadic Kyrgyz population, some of whom still live in traditional yurtas. Kyrgyzstan has the second largest sheep herd in the world after New Zealand. Cattle and the traditional small Kyrgyz horses are also raised. Horse contests ranging from long-distance races to wrestling on horseback are among the most popular sporting events in Kyrgyzstan.

Only about 7 percent of the land can support agriculture, and the majority of that (72 percent) must be irrigated. The Fergana Valley, where much of the nation's crops are grown, has been irrigated since ancient times. About half the land that cannot be used to raise crops is suitable for raising sheep and goats. Kyrgyzstan is a large producer of wool, much of which is exported.

The shift to a market-driven economy has been difficult for Kyrgyzstan, as it has for other former Soviet republics.² Soon after independence, the Kyrgyz government launched an economic reform program. The goal was to move away from a centrally-planned economy to one in which economic decisions are determined primarily by market forces and consumer preferences. Among the steps the government took:

- Creating a Kyrgyz currency, the som, which gave the central bank some ability to stabilize its currency on the world market;
- Reducing the budget deficit so that the government needed to borrow less money;
- Allowing prices to rise to market levels;
- Privatizing all the businesses that were formerly owned by the government.

While all these economic actions hold out the promise that Kyrgyzstan will eventually develop a stable economy, the transition has not been easy for the average Kyrgyz citizen.³ Many factories have closed, some because the raw materials needed for production were now too expensive or not available at all; others because they had equipment so outdated and inefficient that the factory could not sell goods at competitive prices. As factories closed, unemployment increased.

¹Zhamalbek Tuleverdiyev, "The Power Base of Kyrgyzstan," in "Passport to Kyrgyzstan," special section in *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, p. 27.

²Apas Zhumagulov, "Potentials, Prospects, and Problems," in "Passport to Kyrgyzstan," special section in *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, p. 16.

³Bohr, Annette and Simon Crisp, "Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz," in Graham Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States* (New York and London: Longman Group, 1996), p. 400.

Climate

Kyrgyzstan's climate is a function of altitude. Much of the country's mountain region is permanently covered with ice, snow and glaciers. Mountain valleys and lowland areas enjoy relatively moderate temperatures. As a result, many of the herdsmen in Kyrgyzstan practice the tradition of transhumance, taking their herds to cooler mountain pastures in the summer and returning to the warmer valleys in the winter.

Rainfall is comparatively rare, and the summers are hot and dry. "Discovery of Kyrgyzstan," a reference guide published by the International Foundation for the Discovery of Kyrgyzstan, summarizes average temperatures in the lowlands and the highlands:

Average Temperatures

Lowlands

January	April	July	October
21° to 24°F -6° to -4°C	43° to 46°F 6° to 8°C	61° to 75°F 16° to 24°C	39° to 46°F 4° to 8°C

Highlands

January	April	July	October
-4° to 7°F -20° to -14°C	23° to 32°F -5° to 0°C	46° to 54°F 8° to 12°C	23° to 32°F -5° to 0°C

Population

In 1995, approximately 4.5 million people lived in Kyrgyzstan. The population is made up of several ethnic groups. Ethnic Kyrgyz which make up 52.4 percent of the population, are descendents of the nomads who began to migrate into the region in the 10th century.

Russians, now 21.5 percent of the population, began moving into the area in the middle of the 19th century. Under Soviet rule, many more Russians moved into the country, especially in the north. Other significant ethnic groups include Uzbeks (12.9 percent), Ukrainians (2.5 percent), and Germans (2.4 percent). During the last 30 years, ethnic Kyrgyz have steadily increased their share of the population. In that same period, ethnic Europeans have declined from 39 to 27 percent. This trend is the result of emigration by Russians and other Europeans, and of the high birthrate of ethnic Kyrgyz.

Russian was the official language of the country during the Soviet period. Following its independence in 1992, the official language was changed to Kyrgyz, a language of Turkic origin. However, that decision led to unintended consequences for both the country's population and its economy. Between 1989 and 1993, approximately 15.6 percent of the country's Russian population emigrated to Russia. They took with them valuable professional and technological skills, leading to shortages of trained workers during the critical transition to a market economy in the following sectors: construction, machine building, electronics, defense, and cotton growing. Emigrating Russians said that among their reasons for leaving was the law declaring Kyrgyz the state language, and their fears about increasing Islamic influence.

In 1994, both Russian and Kyrgyz were named official languages. Both languages are taught in schools, and the country will be officially bilingual until 2005.

Below are the largest cities and their approximate populations as of 1990:

Bishkek: 631,000	Osh: 218,000
Jalal - Abad: 74,000	Tokmak: 72,000

History and Government

Manas, an ancient epic poem that is an important reflection of Kyrgyz history and culture, tells the story of the struggle of the warrior Manas to make his nation free and independent.⁴ In 1991, that ancient dream became a reality. After the breakup of the U.S.S.R., Kyrgyzstan became a free and independent nation.

Yet, while the country is one of the world's newest, the Kyrgyz people are one of the most ancient. Asian chronicles provide written history of their existence from as early as 2000 B.C. The majority Kyrgyz population is descended from nomadic people who probably began to move into the region between the 9th and 12th centuries.

The Kyrgyz played an important role in creating the Silk Road, a network of travel routes that linked China with western trade areas. In the 13th century, Mongol warriors under the leadership of Genghis Khan conquered Kyrgyzstan. In the middle of the 19th century, Kyrgyzstan was incorporated into the Russian Empire. In 1916, the Kyrgyz revolted against the colonial policies of Czarist Russia, but the rebellion was unsuccessful and Kyrgyzstan became incorporated into the U.S.S.R.

The Soviets forced the Kyrgyz to abandon their traditional nomadic culture. The Kyrgyz were forced onto collective farms. Kyrgyz herders responded by taking their livestock far into the mountains, even into China. In 1936 Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet Socialist Republic, a full member of the U.S.S.R. For the first time in more than two centuries, the overwhelming majority of ethnic Kyrgyz were united into a single political unit. Ethnic Russians migrated to the area in large numbers. Frunze (Bishkek) became a predominantly Russian city.

Under Stalin, further attempts were made to suppress the traditional Kyrgyz culture. However, the Soviet campaign against the epic poetry of Soviet republics (including the Manas poem) was widely resisted by the Kyrgyz. The country declared its independence on August 31, 1991.

People and Culture

"I gathered kites and turned them into hawks. I gathered slaves from different tribes and made them a nation."⁵

- Manas

The Kyrgyz people are famous for their hospitality, and the traditional family remains a strong social bond among the Kyrgyz. The tradition of hospitality is deeply embedded in the culture. Although over two-thirds of the population work in clerical and factory jobs, about 40,000 Kyrgyz continue to live a nomadic life. They spend their summers living in temporary shelters called *yurtas*. These round structures, about 20 feet in diameter, are built on a light, collapsible wood frame. Pierced-felt rugs and weavings form walls and decoration. The traditional herdsman are responsible for herding the more than seven million sheep raised in the country, and for breeding the famous Kyrgyz race horses.

Ancient and modern, classical and contemporary cultural influences can all be seen in Kyrgyzstan. The great epic Manas characterizes the Kyrgyz people's proud independence, courageousness, and noble spirit, and glorifies the legendary nobleman, Manas. It is one of the longest epic works in world literature, estimated at more than half a million lines. The work, which makes early observations on geography, medicine, and literature, is passed on orally from generation to generation. The epic celebrated its millennium in 1995.

Like nearly 800 million people around the world, the majority of citizens in Kyrgyzstan (74 percent) are Muslims. This means they are believers in Islam, which translated literally means, "submission to the will of Allah." Because of its isolation, Kyrgyzstan did not become Islamic until about the 14th century, more than 700 years after the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D. However, from the 14th century on, Islam has been an important part of Kyrgyz culture, and it is reflected in the art, writing, dress, and customs of Kyrgyz people.

⁴E. Shukorov, *Discovery of Kyrgyzstan* (Bishkek: International Foundation "Discovery of Kyrgyzstan," 1993) p. 86.

⁵Manas, quoted in Ergun Cagatay, "Kyrgyzstan: A First Look," *Aramco World*, July-August 1995, p. 21.

During the Soviet period from 1917 to 1991, all religion was suppressed. Since independence, there has been a resurgence of interest in religion, with the reopening and rebuilding of both mosques and churches. Today, Kyrgyzstan is a secular country. The government does not support one religion over another, and there is freedom to worship. The Islamic fundamentalism that has taken root in other parts of the Islamic world has had less influence in Kyrgyzstan.

Schools

All children must attend school at least until the age of 15, and the country has achieved virtually 100 percent literacy. There are Kyrgyz, Russian, and mixed schools. A Kyrgyz school is one in which Kyrgyz is the language of instruction and Russian is taught as a foreign language. A Russian school is the reverse.

Today, according to the "Europa World Year Book 1995," 63.6 percent of students in primary and secondary schools are taught in Kyrgyz, and 23.4 percent are taught in Russian. In colleges and universities, however, the percentage is reversed: in 1993-94, 64.6 percent of university students were taught in Russian and 34.7 percent in Kyrgyz. Very small percentages of students at all levels are taught in Uzbek and Tajik.

Children enter primary school at the age of six. These schools are usually in session for four or five hours daily. Children remain in one classroom for instruction in all courses by one teacher. It is a tradition to invite the first teacher to the high school graduation party. After elementary school, students move on to secondary school. They usually have five or six classes a day, each taught by a different teacher. In the ninth grade, they take examinations. Those who fail one examination may take it again the following autumn. Students who fail more than two exams must repeat the year. Upon leaving the ninth grade, students can go to work or continue their education in a technical school. Only about half go on to high school. Compulsory subjects in high school are mathematics, algebra, geometry, Kyrgyz, Russian, literature, physics, chemistry, foreign language, geography, history, biology, and computers.

(Sources: Information packets produced for Peace Corps trainees and Volunteers by the Kyrgyzstan Country Desk Unit and the country staff of Peace Corps/Kyrgyzstan. "Kyrgyzstan: Introductory Survey." *The Europa World Year Book 1995*, London: Europa Publications, 1995. "Kyrgyzstan," *World Fact Book 1996-97*, Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1996. "Passport to Kyrgyzstan." *The States of the Former Soviet Union: An Updated Overview*, Washington, D.C.: Central Intelligence Agency, 1992. *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, pp. 13-47. Shoemaker, M. Wesley. *Russia, Eurasian States, and Eastern Europe*, 1995. Harpers Ferry, West Virginia: Stryker-Post, 1995. Shukurov, E. *Discovery of Kyrgyzstan*, Bishkek: International Foundation "Discovery of Kyrgyzstan," 1993.)



ACTIVITIES: GRADES 3-5

Where In the World Is Kyrgyzstan?

Geography Standards: (1) How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and techniques to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective. (4) The physical and human characteristics of places.

Objectives:

Students will locate Kyrgyzstan on various maps and will use the information from a variety of maps to learn more about the country. **Note: This lesson may take several class periods.*

Materials Needed:

- Classroom Map of the United States or North America
- Classroom Wall Map of the World or Eurasia
- Classroom Atlas
- Map 1 - Kyrgyzstan in the World
- Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors
- Map 3 - Roads and Railroads
- Map 4 - Topographic Map
- Map 5 - Economic Map
- Activity Sheet "Where in the World Is Kyrgyzstan?" for each student
- Pens and Rulers for each student

Background:

The dissolution of the former Soviet Union has created a whole new geography in Central Asia. Kyrgyzstan, an independent nation since 1991, is one of the new republics. Kyrgyzstan is a small country, about the size of Minnesota. Yet within this small land area are several distinct and diverse cultural influences. The capital city of Bishkek, with its Russian influence, stands in stark contrast to the traditional nomadic lifestyle still prevalent in areas around Naryn.

Kyrgyzstan's mountains are the country's most striking physical feature. Several of the country's mountain peaks are more than 20,000 feet (6067 meters) high and within the country's borders are two of the tallest mountains in the world. Mountains can be viewed as a factor in isolating different cultures.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Ask students to brainstorm about what they already know about Kyrgyzstan. Make a web with the word "Kyrgyzstan" in the center and students' suggestions radiating from it.
2. Ask students to locate Kyrgyzstan on a wall map and talk about its location. Encourage students to name the countries that border Kyrgyzstan and use directional terms to refer to its location.
3. Provide students some of the background information about Kyrgyzstan.

4. Pass out the Activity Sheet "Where in the World is Kyrgyzstan?", and Maps 1, 2, and 3 to each group or individual. For older students or those comfortable working in cooperative groups, you may want to begin working through the activity sheet with the groups and then ask them to work together to complete the activity sheet using the individual maps, the classroom wall maps, and other classroom reference tools. After about 15 minutes, or when the majority of groups have neared completion, go over the activity sheet as a class and compare and discuss the group's findings.

5. Activity Sheet Section A: (1) Have students look at maps, identify Kyrgyzstan, and outline the borders of the country with a pencil. Ask them to describe the shape of Kyrgyzstan. (Answers will vary, but students may say it looks like something with a mouth.) (2) Have students draw a freehand likeness of Kyrgyzstan.

6. Ask students to complete the remaining questions. When they have completed the activity sheet, discuss the answers to the questions with them. Additional questions to discuss might include:

Which map would you use if you had never heard of Kyrgyzstan and had no idea where it was? (Map 1)

Which map would be the easiest to use if you wanted to measure the distance between Bishkek and Jalal-Abad? (Map 3)

Which map would be the best to trace a route from Naryn to Osh? (Map 3)

Which map shows the most detail about Kyrgyzstan? (Map 3)

Answers to the Activity Sheet questions

A

1. Answers will vary
2. Answers will vary
- 3a. Map 2
- 3b. China, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan
4. Map 1
5. Map 3
6. Map 3
7. Map 1: One inch equals 2,666 miles.
One inch equals 4,290.3 kilometers.
Map 2: One inch equals 300 miles.
One inch equals 482.79 kilometers.
Map 3: One inch equals 100 miles.
One inch equals 160.93 kilometers.
8. China

B

1. Yes
2. Yes
3. No
4. Yes
5. Yes
6. No
7. No
8. Yes
9. No
10. Yes

7. Discuss the legends for each of the maps in detail. Have students identify the things they can learn from the legend for each map, such as:

- Each of the maps has a different scale.
- The scale of the map describes the relationship between a distance on the map and the corresponding distance on the ground.
- If necessary, demonstrate scale further by having students draw things to scale using a grid method. (See the World Wise Schools World Map Project HandBook, available through the Government Printing Office [GPO], for examples.)

8. Help students compare the height of the mountains in Kyrgyzstan with other mountains with which they may be more familiar. Use the following chart to help make the comparison:

How High Are Those Mountains?

Mountain	Location	Height
Everest	Nepal Himalayas	29,028 ft. (8,848 meters)
Godwin Austen (K-2)	Kashmir Karakoram Mts.	28,250 ft. (8,611 meters)
Pik Pobeda	Kyrgyzstan Tian Shan Mts.	24,406 ft. (7,439 meters)
Khan Tengri	Kyrgyzstan Tian Shan Mts.	22,880 ft. (6,974 meters)
Mt. McKinley	Alaska Alaska Mts.	20,320 ft. (6,149 meters)

(Source: *Information Please Almanac*, 1995, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston & New York.)

Then, based on the information students have from the maps and charts, ask them to:

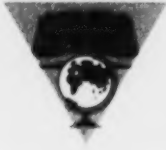
- **think** about how the mountains may affect people in Kyrgyzstan
- **pair up** to discuss their responses
- **share** what they have discussed with the class.

Responses may include:

- The mountains affect the climate of the country, and it is colder in the mountains than in the valleys.
- The mountains make growing crops more difficult. Very little of the land is arable, suitable for cultivation.
- The mountains make transportation within the country difficult.
- The mountains served to cut Kyrgyzstan off from the rest of the world. One result of this isolation is that many parts of the country have preserved much of the traditional Kyrgyz culture.

Extension Activity

- Use the World Wide Web to research more about Kyrgyzstan's location, and the countries surrounding it.
- Use a search engine to find web sites with information about latitude and longitude.



Where in the World Is Kyrgyzstan?

A. Use maps 1, 2, and 3 and your classroom wall maps to answer the following questions.

1. Find Kyrgyzstan on each map. On each map, outline the borders of Kyrgyzstan with a pen or pencil. How would you describe the shape of Kyrgyzstan?

2. Try drawing a freehand map of Kyrgyzstan here.

Use maps 1, 2, and 3, as well as your classroom wall map, to answer the following questions.

3. Which map would be the easiest to use if you wanted to find the countries that border Kyrgyzstan?

3b. Write the names of two of the countries that border Kyrgyzstan:

4. Which map would you use if you had never heard of Kyrgyzstan and had no idea where in the world it was?

5. Which map would be the easiest to use if you wanted to measure the distance between Bishkek and Jalal-Abad?

6. Which map would be the best to trace a route from China to Kyrgyzstan?

7. Look at the legend for each of the maps. The legend is the key to unlocking the secrets of a map. These maps are different because they are different scales. The scale of the map describes the relationship between a distance on the map and the corresponding distance on the ground. Maps have different scales.

Map 1: One inch equals _____ miles.
One inch equals _____ kilometers.

Map 2: One inch equals _____ miles.
One inch equals _____ kilometers.

Map 3: One inch equals _____ miles.
One inch equals _____ kilometers.

8. Is Kyrgyzstan closer to Iran or China? _____

B. Now look at Map 4 and Map 5. Read the following questions and circle the correct answer.

- | | | |
|--|-----|----|
| 1. Most of Kyrgyzstan is covered by mountains. | Yes | No |
| 2. There are many sheep in Kyrgyzstan. | Yes | No |
| 3. Oranges are grown in Kyrgyzstan. | Yes | No |

Using everything you have learned from all the maps and classroom discussion, answer these questions.

- | | | |
|---|-----|----|
| 4. Kyrgyzstan used to be part of the U.S.S.R. | Yes | No |
| 5. Kyrgyzstan is in the northern hemisphere. | Yes | No |
| 6. Kyrgyzstan is bordered by India. | Yes | No |
| 7. Kyrgyzstan has been an independent country for over 200 years. | Yes | No |
| 8. Kyrgyzstan is about the same size as Minnesota. | Yes | No |
| 9. Bishkek is northwest of Moscow. | Yes | No |
| 10. Bishkek and Denver are at about the same latitude. | Yes | No |

What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?

Geography Standards: (4) The physical and human characteristics of places; (15) How physical systems affect human systems.

Objective:

Students will understand that the high mountains that cross Kyrgyzstan cause great diversity in the industry, way of life, and ethnic composition of the three regions of Kyrgyzstan shown in the video.

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?" for each student
- Map 3 - Roads and Railroads
- The World Wise Schools video, "Destination: Kyrgyzstan"
- Venn Diagram "Life in Kyrgyzstan and Life in the U.S."

Background:

The high mountains found throughout Kyrgyzstan create very different lifestyles, even in cities that are only a few hundred miles apart. So the answer to the question "What's it like to live in Kyrgyzstan?" depends on which part of the country one is speaking.

Melis lives in Jalal-Abad, a city of 74,000 in the south of Kyrgyzstan. This city is located on the ancient Silk Road, the route traders used from before the time of Marco Polo. Located in the Fergana basin, the land around Jalal-Abad is flat enough to support agriculture. Because this region has low rainfall, most crops are irrigated with water flowing down from the high mountains in the east. The factories in this city tend to process agricultural products grown nearby. For example, a typical factory might process cotton.

Oleg lives just outside Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Oleg is Russian, like more than half the population of Bishkek. The Russian influence can be heard on the street (most of the people speak Russian) and seen in the architecture (for example, most people live in apartment buildings rather than in private homes). Bishkek is the largest city in Kyrgyzstan, the home of many universities, and the location of most of the nation's factories.

Medina lives in Naryn, which is located high in the Tian Shan Mountains. Throughout history, these mountains have isolated Naryn. As a consequence, Kyrgyz culture has been preserved here. Most of the people (88 percent) are Kyrgyz, and most speak Kyrgyz rather than Russian. Agriculture is the primary industry and many people still raise sheep.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Tell students that geography affects how people live and work. Ask students to think about how geography affects the way people live and work in your area. On the board, write:

- Name of your city
- Location (latitude and longitude, proximity to other cities)
- Altitude
- Land and water formations nearby
- Natural resources
- Historical background

Have students work in pairs to write what they know about each of these characteristics of your community, and how each affects the way people live and work in your area. When students have had a chance to work together, ask them to share what they have learned with the class. Record the information your students develop. If necessary, allow more time for research about your area.

2. Pass out the Activity Sheet "What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?" Have your students locate Jalal-Abad, Bishkek, and Naryn on Map 3.
3. Have students read the descriptions of the three teenagers.
4. On the basis of the descriptions of the three teens' home towns, have students predict what they expect to see in each city when they watch the video. Write their predictions on the board.
5. Watch the video.
6. Discuss the video with your students. Did your students see what they expected to see? What was different? In what ways are the young people in the video like your students? How are they different?
7. The video shows some of the physical features of each of these three parts of Kyrgyzstan. Have your students list some of the physical features they observed for each city.

Answers might include:

- Jalal-Abad is on the site of the old Silk Road, has enough flat land for agriculture, and is close to Kazakhstan geographically.
- Bishkek is close to Russia, and cut off from Jalal-Abad by the Tian Shan Mountains.
- Naryn lies in a remote, mountainous region, winters are very cold, and there is little flat land.

8. How do these geographic features affect the way people live and work in each of these cities?

Answers might include:

- Jalal-Abad is a multi-ethnic city, with people from across Asia; the factories in Jalal-Abad are most likely to process agricultural goods that are grown nearby.
- Bishkek is the most Russian city. It is also the industrial center of the nation.
- Naryn is the most traditionally Kyrgyz city. It is the place where you are most likely to see people riding on horseback and living in yurtas.

9. In conclusion, have your students work in three groups to complete a Venn diagram (see pg. 70) comparing the life of one of the teens in the video with your students' lives in the United States. Each group should choose a different teen. Then have students share their diagrams with the class.

Extension Activity

Research how the physical features of your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country affect how people live and work.



What's It Like to Live in Kyrgyzstan?

The high mountains found throughout Kyrgyzstan create very different lifestyles, even in cities that are only a few hundred miles apart. So the answer to the question "What's it like to live in Kyrgyzstan?" depends on which part of the country one is speaking. When you watch the video, you will learn more about the lives of three Kyrgyz teenagers.

Melis

Melis lives in Jalal-Abad, a very old city. Traders have travelled through the city for hundreds of years. Who knows...perhaps even Marco Polo may have passed through. Today, people from all over the world can be seen on the streets of Jalal-Abad. Sometimes, it is possible to tell a person's nationality just by looking at the hat he or she wears.

Melis' name comes from the great heroes of the U.S.S.R. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin. Today, students in Kyrgyzstan still learn about these heroes in school, but they also study the great Kyrgyz hero, Manas. For more than a thousand years, people have been reciting this poem. Usually, they recite only part of it, because it is more than half a million lines long.

Since the country became independent, people have been free to practice their religion. Most of the people in the town are Moslems. New mosques are being built and old mosques are being reopened. Jalal-Abad is located in a valley that grows much of the food for people in the rest of Kyrgyzstan. Driving to Bishkek, the capital city of the country, can take more than twelve hours. In the winter, the mountain road can be closed because of snow.

Oleg

Oleg lives in a little town just outside Bishkek. The capital of the country, Bishkek is about the same size as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, or Memphis, Tennessee. Oleg's father is a lawyer and his mother teaches school. Like most of the people in this city, his family is Russian and moved to Bishkek at the beginning of the century. Oleg's father's parents came from Ukraine and his mother's family came from Russia.

Even though Oleg's family lives in the city, they have a garden where they raise some of their food. They grow apples, apricots, and potatoes, which they preserve for the winter. As the capital of the country, Bishkek has several universities. Many of the people in Bishkek used to work in factories, but since Kyrgyzstan became independent, many of the factories have closed.

Medina

Medina is 15 years old and lives in Naryn. It is a small city of about 42,000 people in the Tian Shan Mountains. The mountains are so steep here that the town is a mile wide (1.61 meters) but more than ten miles (16.1 meters) long. It's hard to get to Naryn, so there are few visitors from outside the area. Nearby, some people still live in yurtas and ride on horseback (though they may park their car nearby). Many people raise sheep.

It is cold in Naryn in the winter, and temperatures sometimes get down to -40°F (-40°C). It's not unusual for it to snow in June. Medina and her friends listen to American music

and love to dance. Family is very important to Medina. Her father is a banker. Her mother is a doctor of veterinary medicine. In the future, Medina would like to open a fashion store.

What kinds of things would you expect to see in each of these teenagers' cities?

Melis from Jalal-Abad

Oleg from a town near Bishkek

Medina from Naryn

Hats Here and There

Geography Standard: (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Objective:

Students will learn that hats or other clothing may be associated with different regions of a country, with different occupations, with different religions, or with different generations. **Note: The day before you teach this lesson, ask students to bring in a favorite hat to show the class.*

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "Hats Here and There" for each student
- Colored pens, pencils, and crayons
- If desired, a collection of different hats

Background:

What people wear is part of the Earth's cultural mosaic. Clothing, particularly hats, often signifies something about the wearer's religion, ethnicity, occupation, or special interest. In Kyrgyzstan, hats reflect people's pride in their cultural heritage. The *kalpak* is the traditional Kyrgyz hat. It is made of felt and is usually white with a black rim. The *dolpo* is a square hat, often black. It is worn most frequently in the south. The traditional women's white hat was forbidden during the years of Soviet domination. Women wear it today only on special occasions as an expression of cultural pride.

NOTE: In some classes, students may identify hats as a source of conflict e.g. hats associated with specific gangs or with rival sports teams. Some teachers may wish to use this lesson as a way to help students understand the symbolism involved in certain articles of clothing.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Ask students to show the class the hat they brought. Why is it their favorite? Ask students what they can tell about the individuals in the class based on their favorite hats.
2. Explain that in Kyrgyzstan, hats reflect people's pride in their cultural heritage. Is the same true in this country? Ask questions such as these:

Can you think of any hats that are associated with a particular part of the country? (e.g. cowboy hats with the West).

Are certain hats worn more by one generation more than another? (e.g. teenagers wearing their baseball hats backwards).

Can hats indicate occupations? (e.g. a baker's hat or a hard hat).

Can you think of a hat that is an outward symbol of a person's religious belief? (e.g. the Sikh turban or the Jewish yarmulke).

3. Hand out the Activity Sheet "Hats Here and There."
4. If your students have seen the video, you may wish to have them view it again, this time watching for hats. Have students complete the activity sheet by drawing a picture of a hat that reflects their cultural heritage.
5. You might want to extend this activity by creating a bulletin board or even a student-written book on what they have learned about hats.

Extension Activity

Students who are corresponding with a Peace Corps Volunteer can extend this activity by getting pictures and descriptions of hats or other clothing worn in the Volunteer's host country.



Hats Here and There



This man is wearing a *kalpak*, the traditional Kyrgyz hat. It is made out of felt and is usually white with a black rim.



Children often wear hats in Kyrgyzstan. The boy on the left is wearing a *dolpo*, a square hat, often black, worn most frequently in the south of the country. The boy on the right is wearing a *tobetoy*, a prayer hat.

Draw a picture of a hat that reflects your cultural heritage or something unique about you.

Who's a Nomad?

Geography Standards: (3) How to analyze the spatial organization of people, places, and environments on the Earth's surface. (9) The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

Objectives:

- Students will be able to define the word nomad and will identify nomadic peoples in Kyrgyzstan and in the United States.
- Students will be able to define transhumance and identify the geographic characteristics that lead to this form of animal husbandry.

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "KWL About Nomads" for each student
- Activity Sheet "Who's a Nomad?" for each student
- Picture of *yurta* (pg. VI) for each student

Background:

A nomad is a person who moves from one place to another as a way of making a living. The word nomad comes from a Greek word that means, "one who wanders for pastures." Nomads move for different reasons. Pastoral nomads, like the Kyrgyz, travel to find water or pastures for their herds. Hunting and gathering nomads, like some American Indian tribes, move in search of game and water. Nomadic craftworkers and merchants travel to serve their customers.

In Kyrgyzstan, the variation in altitude causes great variations in temperature. These variations have led to a widely-practiced tradition in animal husbandry known as transhumance, in which herdsman take their animals to cool summer pastures high in the mountains and then return them to warmer valleys in the winter. At one time, most Kyrgyz were nomads. Today, about 40,000 Kyrgyz continue to live a nomadic life. These nomadic Kyrgyz herd the more than seven million sheep raised in the country. While herding, their children stay with relatives or in boarding schools. Nomadic Kyrgyz live in temporary shelters called *yurtas* — round structures about 20 feet in diameter. *Yurtas* are made from strong poles covered by felt rugs.

"The Kyrgyz are an oriental people who may be descended from the Mongols. Their traditional lifestyle was nomadic. They wandered back and forth, from north to south, across the central Asian steppes. This changed only within the last 100 years, and mostly during the last 60 years."

- Bill Heaphy, Peace Corps Volunteer, 1995.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Hand out the Activity Sheet "KWL About Nomads." Write the word nomad on the board. In small groups, have students list everything they already know about nomads on the activity sheet. Make sure they include the nomadic peoples with whom they are familiar. Have them share their lists and write their responses on the board.
2. In the second column of the Activity Sheet, ask students to list the things they want to learn about nomads in Kyrgyzstan and in other parts of the world. Many may be interested in finding out why there are so few nomads left in the world.
3. Pass out the Activity Sheet "Who's a Nomad?" Have students read it and then discuss it. Have the students rewrite the excerpt from *Manas* in their own words.

In your discussion, remind students that in Kyrgyzstan, variations in altitude lead to great variations in temperature. Because the temperature in the mountains and the valleys is so different, Kyrgyz nomads practice transhumance — they take their animals to cool summer pastures high in the mountains and then return them to warmer valleys in the winter. Where else do people practice transhumance? (Switzerland)

4. Ask students what kind of a house they would need if they were nomads. (One that is easy to set up and take down, lightweight, and easy to move.)
5. Make copies of pg. VI in the preface of this study guide, and ask students if the yurt reminds them of anything? (Many students will say that it is similar to a tepee.)
6. Tell students that many Kyrgyz people were nomads until very recently. Today, many people who live in cities and work in factories have grandparents who were nomads. For this reason, the traditional symbol of the Kyrgyz people is the yurt.
7. Refer back to the Activity Sheet. Have students identify what they learned in this lesson. In the second column, have them check off the items they learn. In the third column, expand the list with other information they learned. Students may need to do additional research in the library or on the internet to find the answers to all their questions.

Extension Activities:

- Are there nomads in the country where your Peace Corps Volunteer lives? Learn more about their lifestyle. What similarities are there between these nomads and the Kyrgyz people?
- Research other temporary shelters. Construct a model or make a drawing of one or more of these temporary shelters.
- Have students look for news stories about people who move to seek work (migrant workers). Are these people considered nomads? Why? Why not?



KWL About Nomads

What we know about nomads	What we want to learn about nomads	What we learned about nomads



Who's a Nomad?

A nomad is a person who moves from one place to another as a way of making a living. The word nomad comes from a Greek word that means, "one who wanders for pastures."

Nomads move for different reasons. Pastoral nomads, like the Kyrgyz, travel to find water or pastures for their herds. Hunting and gathering nomads, like some American Indian tribes, move in search of game and water. Craftworkers and merchants who lead a nomadic lifestyle, travel to serve their customers.

Facts About Nomads in Kyrgyzstan

Today, about 40,000 Kyrgyz people live as nomads. They herd more than seven million sheep. They also raise horses. They live in temporary shelters called *yurtas* — round structures about 20 feet in diameter. Yurtas are made from strong poles covered by felt rugs.

The traditional Manas poem describes a yurta this way:

*Look at her beauty!
White as snow she was.
Made not from felt, but from cloth.
Trellised wall varnished was.
And a mat, made from chi¹
Was with silk braided.
Ropes round the yurta
Of quaint beauty were.
When Manas came in the yurta
By luxury and beauty he was
Deeply surprised.*

The yurta costs the Kyrgyz about the same amount of money as a nice car. Today, it is not unusual to see a shepherd's yurta with a car parked beside it. There are no nails in a yurta. The pieces of wood fit together, although they can also be tied with leather thongs. It takes a craftsman about 25 days to build a yurta but it will last for 25 years. Once it's built, it only takes a few hours to set up or take down.

Find out more about the temporary dwellings (i.e. tepees, igloos) of other nomadic peoples. How are they like a yurta? How are they different?

Although most people live in houses or apartments, some families also have temporary dwellings that they can move easily from place to place. What are some of these temporary dwellings?

¹Steppe grass

What's In a Name?

Geography Standard: (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Objective:

Students will learn some of the most common Kyrgyz names and their meanings.

Materials Needed:

- Books giving the meaning of names, if possible
- Activity Sheet "What's In a Name?" for each student

Background:

Kyrgyz names reflect Kyrgyz culture. Many of the names are based on things found in nature. For example, a common girl's name is Aigul ("eye-COOL"), a combination of "Ai," meaning moon, and "gul," meaning flower. This is common in a culture that has been primarily agricultural and rural.

Teaching This Lesson

1. One or two days before teaching this lesson, ask students to talk to their parents about their name. What led their parents to choose the name? Is there any family or historical significance to the name?
2. Talk about what students learned about their own name. Why were they given their name?
3. Talk about names in Kyrgyzstan. Hand out a copy of the Activity Sheet "What's In a Name?" to each student.
4. Have students look at the Kyrgyz names and their meanings. What conclusions might students draw about the traditional Kyrgyz culture from these names? List these conclusions on the board.
5. Have students create a new Kyrgyz name for themselves and write about its meaning. Why did they choose the name?

Extension Activity:

Use the internet to learn more about names and their meanings. Using a search engine on the internet or a book of names in the library or your classroom, have students research the language origins of their name, a Kyrgyz name, or a name that is common in your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country.



What's In a Name?

Kyrgyz names have meanings. For example, a common girl's name is Aigul ("eye-GOOL"), a combination of "Ai," meaning moon, and "gul," meaning flower.

Female Names

Aida (ah-EE-dah)
 Aigul (eye-GOOL)
 Ainura (eye-NOOR-a)
 Aisulu (eye-soo-LOO)
 Altinai (al-tin-EYE)
 Asel (ah-SYEL)
 Baktigul (bak-tee-GOOL)
 Cholpol (chol-PONE)
 Dilara (dee-LAH-rah)
 Dimira (die-MEER-ah)
 Dinara (dee-NAH-rah)
 Gulzat (gool-ZAHT)
 Keres (keh-REHS)
 Mirgul (meer-GOOL)
 Nargiza (nar-GEEZ-ah)
 Nazgul (NAHZ-gool)
 Nurzat (noor-ZAHT)
 Zarina (zah-REEN-ah)

Male Names

Adilet (ah-dee-LYET)
 Aibek (eye-BECK)
 Alik (ah-LEEK)
 Almaz (ahl-MAHZ)
 Asan (ah-SAHN)
 Azamat(ah-zah-MAHT)
 Azat (ah-ZAHT)
 Aziz (ah-ZEEZ)
 Bakyt (bah-KIT)
 Emil (eh-MYEL)
 Jyrgal (jeer-GAHL)
 Kuban (koo-BAHN)
 Nurbek (noor-BEHK)
 Nurdeen (neer-DEEN)
 Sultan (sool-TAHN)
 Timurbek (tee-mer-BEHK)
 Usen (oo-SYEN)

Here are some of the words that are combined to create Kyrgyz names, along with their meanings. Use this list to create some Kyrgyz names of your own.

Adilet	Justice
Ai	Moon
Almaz	Diamond
Altin	Gold
Azamat	Very good
Bak	Tree
Bakyt	Happiness
Bek	Male (masculine ending)
Cholpon	Venus (morning star)
Gul	Flower
Jildiz	Star
Jyrgal	Gladness
Mir	Peace
Sulu	Beautiful

- Now create a Kyrgyz name for yourself. Write it on a name card and put it on your desk.
- Do some research on the history of your own name. Share what you have learned with the class.



ACTIVITIES: GRADES 6-9

Kyrgyzstan Identified

Geography Standards: (1) How to use maps and other geographic representations, tools, and techniques to acquire, process, and report information from a spatial perspective. (2) How to use mental maps to organize information about people, places, and environments in a spatial context. (4) The physical and human characteristics of places.

Objectives:

- Students will create a mental map of Kyrgyzstan and surrounding countries.
- Students will learn how the mountains in Kyrgyzstan have affected how people live and work.

**Note: This lesson may take several class periods to complete.*

Materials Needed:

- Classroom Map of the United States or North America
- Classroom Wall Map of the World or Eurasia
- Classroom Atlas
- Map 1 - Kyrgyzstan in the World
- Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors
- Map 3 - Roads and Railroads
- Map 4 - Topographic Map
- Map 5 - Economic Map
- Activity Sheet "Going to Osh" for each student
- Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan Identified" for each student
- Pens and rulers for each student

Background:

The physical features of a country affect where people live and how they earn their living. That is true in Kyrgyzstan. The country's mountains, some of which are more than 24,000 feet high, have significantly affected its population distribution and its economy.

Kyrgyzstan and the surrounding nations are sometimes called the "roof of the world." The Tian Shan Mountains form the border between Kyrgyzstan and China. In this mountain range are two of the tallest peaks in central Asia, Pik Pobeda, at 24,406 feet (7,439 meters) and Khan Tengri, which is 22,949 feet (6,995 meters) high. The Pamir-Alai Mountains, many of which are more than 23,000 feet (7,000 meters) in height, are the principal geographic feature of the southwestern part of the country.

Ninety percent of the land has an altitude of at least 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) above sea level. Because of the high altitude, at least 75 percent of the land is covered by permafrost, meaning that the ground never completely thaws, even in the summer (although a shallow layer of soil may thaw during the summer). Only about 7 percent of the country's land is cultivated. However, since most of the lowlands suitable for farming receive about 7 inches (17 centimeters) of rainfall per year, it is necessary for crops to be irrigated. Water for the irrigation comes from melting snow high in the mountains. Problems have begun with neighboring countries, who are also dependent on that water for their own agricultural production. With limited water resources, conflicts arise over water rights and use.

Most crops can be grown only at elevations below 5,000 feet. Cotton, tobacco, sugar beets, wheat, and barley are the main crops. Fruits and vegetables can be grown on irrigated land near Lake Issyk Kul. The mountains are suitable for herding. Sheep and goats can graze in the highest mountains. Horses and cattle are also raised. Kyrgyzstan is the third largest producer of wool and mutton (sheep meat) in the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The mountains also provide two other important economic resources for the country: hydroelectric power, which provides about half the country's power, and mining. Coal, lead, gold, and other rare earth metals are among the country's major exports. Formerly part of the U.S.S.R., the country is bordered by Kazakhstan in the north, Tajikistan to the south, Uzbekistan in the west, and the Republic of China to the southeast.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Ask students to define mental maps. Explain to students that everyone uses mental maps. If asked to map the route from their home to school, most students could draw a map without much difficulty. Explain to students that because Kyrgyzstan was part of the U.S.S.R. until 1991, many people still do not know where it is. This activity will help students create a mental map so they will remember the location of Kyrgyzstan. Tell students that the more accurately they can create a mental map of this region, or any other region in the world, the better they will be able to understand the things they hear and read.
2. Teach students to create a mental map of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors. Give students Map 2 without the country names. Have students color each country, then have them fill in country names.
3. Ask students to use a blank piece of paper to make a freehand drawing of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors. They may use Map #2 as a reference.
4. Have them start by drawing a compass rose in one corner of the blank paper. Help students to create a mental map of Kyrgyzstan and its neighbors.
 - a. First ask students to draw a large circle in the east to represent China.
 - b. Have students make a large rectangle across the north to represent Russia.
 - c. Have students draw a large oval touching Russia's southern border and China's northwestern border to represent Kazakhstan.
 - d. Have students refer to Map 2 to view the location of Kyrgyzstan south of Kazakhstan and west of China. Have them describe what they think Kyrgyzstan looks like, and have them add the sketch of Kyrgyzstan to their mental map. Make sure they pay attention to the relative size of Kyrgyzstan in relation to Russia, China, and Kazakhstan.
 - e. Have students add a small circle to represent Tajikistan on Kyrgyzstan's southern border.
 - f. Have students add a larger circle to represent Uzbekistan touching the western borders of both Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan and the southern border of Kazakhstan.
 - g. Then have them draw another circle about the same size on Uzbekistan's southwestern border.
 - h. Finally, have students represent Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan by using smaller circles from west to east touching the borders of the southernmost countries.
5. Remind students that this was not the way the map of this region of the world looked before 1991. Discuss which countries were formerly part of the U.S.S.R.
6. At a later time, perhaps after studying the region further, ask students to recreate a freehand "mental map" of this region. When the students have completed the map, have them compare it to their original drawing, and to Map 2, to check their accuracy in locating Kyrgyzstan and the other countries of the region.

7. Pass out Map 3, Map 4, and Map 5, the Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan Identified," and the Activity Sheet "Going to Osh." Have students work with partners to answer the questions.

Answers to the Activity Sheet questions

1. 3,000 feet.
2. Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir, parts of Chile and Argentina
3. Raising livestock, herding
4. It would be difficult to raise crops in areas covered by permafrost.
5. At the lowest altitudes
6. Herding, hydroelectric energy, some mining
7. Through Jizzakh (Note: the route goes through three countries Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan)
8. "Going to Osh" describes how the mountains have isolated regions within Kyrgyzstan. The title refers to the fact that the author had not met anyone who had traveled from Naryn to Osh, even though the distance is approximately the same as the distance between Washington, D.C., and New York.
9. Answers will vary, but may include:
 - Northwest of China
 - Bordered by Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China, and Tajikistan
 - 43°N, 70°E

Extension Activity

Locate an altitude (or topographic) map of your Peace Corps Volunteer's country. Describe how the physical features of this country affect economic activity.

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34



Kyrgyzstan Identified

You will need Map 3, Map 4, and Map 5 to complete this Activity Sheet.

1. Look at the topographic map. Most of Kyrgyzstan has an elevation above _____ feet.
2. What are some other places you know that have the same altitude?

3. How do many people earn a living in these places? (You can use textbooks, encyclopedias, or the internet to find the answer to this question)

4. At least 75 percent of the land is covered by permafrost, meaning that the ground never completely thaws, even in the summer (although a shallow layer of soil may thaw during the summer). How would that affect agriculture in this primarily agrarian country?

5. Compare the information on the topographic map with the information showing Kyrgyzstan's economic activities. Where are grain and other crops grown?

6. What economic activities are carried out in the mountains?

7. What route would you have to take if you were traveling from Bishkek to Jalal-Abad by train?

8. Before you read "Going to Osh," make some predictions about how Kyrgyzstan's mountains might affect the country's cultural development. In what ways might the mountains protect the unique cultures that are found in Kyrgyzstan?

9. Describe the location of Kyrgyzstan in at least three different ways.



Going to Osh

"For two years, I had a big map of Kyrgyzstan hanging on my wall in Naryn. I studied the small ribbons of road that led to every corner of the country and tried to visit as many regions as possible. But when I talked to people in Naryn about going to other towns and villages, I found they didn't know very much about it. In fact, I had a hard time finding anyone from Naryn who had been anywhere else in the country besides Bishkek and Lake Issyk Kul.

I thought this was strange, so I started polling my students. Out of almost 100 students, I found only one who had been to Osh (the second largest city in Kyrgyzstan). Everyone seemed to know where it was but no one had been there. Looking at the map hanging in my room, I could see a road that went straight west from Naryn, through the town of Kazarman to Jalal-Abad and Osh. The distance wasn't that far, about the same as it is from New York City to Washington, D.C. It looked like such an easy thing to do. So why didn't anybody ever go there?

The first reason, I found out, is because of physical geography. Between Osh and Naryn, there's a huge wall of mountains. There is a road, but it is mostly rock or dirt. It's closed during the winter when snow makes it impassible. I later took this road and found out it took a lot longer than it does to get from New York City to Washington, D.C. In fact, it took two days to travel from Naryn to Osh in June!

The second reason is because of history and cultural geography. People mainly travel in Kyrgyzstan to visit friends or relatives, usually for weddings and funerals. Most of the people in Naryn are ancient Kyrgyz whose families grew up there or in the surrounding area. Many have relatives who have moved to Bishkek or Issyk Kul, but it's rare to find relatives in Osh or Jalal-Abad. On the other side of the mountains live people who are a mixture of many nationalities including Kyrgyz, Uzbek, and Russian. The people in Osh and Jalal-Abad have families who grew up in many different places, but usually not in Naryn. So not many people have a reason to travel between the two cities.

It's strange to think that a country that is only the size of Minnesota is more like two nations, and that getting from one side to the other can be so difficult, even impossible in the winter. I was going to be in Kyrgyzstan for two years and had the time and money to travel around and see the country. All my friends in Naryn didn't and they couldn't understand why I would want to take a long, uncomfortable bus ride to another town or village where I didn't know anyone. After two years, I think they understood a little better why I wanted to travel. And after several long and bumpy bus rides, I had a better idea of why they didn't!"

- Jack Hillmeyer served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan Up Close

Geography Standards: (15) How physical systems affect human systems. (17) How to apply geography to interpret the past.

Objective:

Students will explore the geographic and cultural differences among three cities in Kyrgyzstan.

**Note: Students will view the video as part of this lesson.*

Materials Needed:

- Map 1 - Kyrgyzstan in the World
- Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors
- Map 3 - Roads and Railroads
- The World Wise Schools video "Destination: Kyrgyzstan"
- Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan Up Close: Student Reading" for each student
- Venn Diagram "Life in Kyrgyzstan and Life in the U.S."

Background:

The high mountains found throughout Kyrgyzstan create very different lifestyles, even in cities that are only a few hundred miles apart. Taking a close-up look at only one part of the country would not give a clear picture of the country's diversity. This video focuses on life in three Kyrgyz cities.

Jalal-Abad is a city of 74,000 in the south of Kyrgyzstan. This city is located on the ancient Silk Road that route traders used from before the time of Marco Polo. Located in the Fergana basin, the land around Jalal-Abad is flat enough to support agriculture. Because this region has low rainfall, most crops are irrigated with water flowing down from the high mountains in the east. The factories in this city tend to process agricultural products grown nearby. For example, a typical factory might process cotton.

Bishkek is the capital of Kyrgyzstan. More than half the population of this city is Russian, and the Russian influence can be heard on the street (most of the people speak Russian) and seen in the architecture (for example, most people live in apartment buildings rather than in private homes). This is the largest city in Kyrgyzstan, the home of many universities, and the location of most of the nation's factories.

Naryn is located high in the Tian Shan Mountains. Throughout history, these mountains have isolated Naryn. As a consequence, the Kyrgyz culture has been preserved here. Most of the people (88 percent) are Kyrgyz, and most speak Kyrgyz rather than Russian. Agriculture is the primary industry, and many people still raise sheep.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Tell your students that in this lesson, you will take a closer look at some of the cities in Kyrgyzstan.
2. Hand out the Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan Up Close: Student Reading." Have students read it. Ask your students to offer brief descriptions of each city. Write their answers on the board.
3. Have students look at the population statistics for each of the three cities. Which city has a majority of ethnic Russians? (Bishkek) Which has a majority of ethnic Kyrgyz? (Naryn) Which has the largest concentration of Uzbeks? (Jalal-Abad) Have students use Map 2 to speculate about some of the reasons for the ethnic makeup of each of the cities.
4. Ask students to make predictions about what they will see when they watch the video: Where would they expect to see factories? Herds of sheep? Where would they expect to find people wearing traditional Kyrgyz clothing? As they watch, have them look for visible cultural elements in each of the three cities that reflect the ethnic population in that city.

5. Discuss the video with your students. Were their predictions accurate? In what ways are their lives like the lives of the teens featured in the video? In what ways are their lives different? Students may want to create a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences.
6. Remind students of their earlier discussion about the population of each of these cities. Ask students to discuss how the physical features of Kyrgyzstan have affected migration into, and within, the country. How has this affected the distinct cultural patterns seen in each of the three cities?

Extension Activity:

Learn about two or three cities in your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country. What are the important differences in the way people live and work in these cities? What accounts for the differences?



Kyrgyzstan Up Close

The high mountains found throughout Kyrgyzstan create very different lifestyles, even in cities that are only a few hundred miles apart. Taking a close-up look at only one part of the country would not give a clear picture of the country's diversity.

Naryn

"Naryn is a town that developed on the banks of the Naryn River, about 6 hours from the capital, Bishkek. The town is . . . wedged between two rows of mountains. It is the poorest, most remote region. But it is also the most Kyrgyz. In no other area of the country is Kyrgyz as widely spoken . . . It is also probably the most beautiful of all the regions. The winter cold and difficult terrain combine with a lack of resources to make life very difficult."

- Jack Hillmeyer, Peace Corps Volunteer, 1995

Located in the southern part of Kyrgyzstan in the Tian Shan Mountains, Naryn was first established in 1868 as a Russian garrison. Most of the city was built since World War II. Today, approximately 42,000 people, 88 percent of whom are Kyrgyz, live in the city. It is more than a mile above sea level. The climate is cold most of the year. The average temperature in January is 0°F (-18°C) and it sometimes drops to -15°F (-26°C). Most of the people (82 percent) work in agriculture. Horses are still an important mode of transportation. Today, approximately 42,000 people live in the city. The ethnic breakdown is as follows:

Kyrgyz:	88 percent
Russian:	6.5 percent

Jalal-Abad

"Most people live in large apartment buildings, with a lesser percent living in one-family houses with enclosed courtyards. . . . Jalal-Abad is very industrial. They have a blanket and mattress factory, a cotton processing factory, and a candy factory. It is in a valley surrounded by foothills with almond trees and mountains beyond."

-Andrea Steege, Peace Corps Volunteer, 1995

Jalal-Abad is one of the main industrial and cultural centers in the south of Kyrgyzstan. It lies in the foothills of the Fergana mountain range. Many fruit and nut trees grow in the forests just north of the city. Temperature varies widely in January, when it may be as cold as 14°F (-10°C), while in the summer it may reach 95°F (35°C). Through the use of irrigation, the land supports agriculture including crops such as cotton. The population is approximately 74,000, and includes the following ethnic groups:

Uzbeks:	39 percent
Russians:	24 percent
Kyrgyz:	21 percent
Tatars:	6 percent
Ukrainians:	4 percent

Bishkek

"Bishkek is the capital, with a population of approximately 600,000. There are individual houses, but the majority of people live in Soviet-style apartment buildings. Most of the factories and industries closed with the Soviet collapse. The city is relatively flat, but the beautiful Tian Shan Mountains can be seen to the south."

- Carole Heap, Peace Corps Volunteer, 1995



The video highlights a small community located very near Bishkek, the capital of the Kyrgyzstan. Bishkek, located in the northern Chu valley, is the nation's economic capital. It is also the cultural capital of the nation and the home of several universities. The city was founded by the Khan of Kokand, who built a clay fort there in 1825. He called the city Pishpek. In 1916, only about 4,000 people lived in the city. The Russians renamed the city Frunze (after a local hero of the Russian Revolution) in 1926. In 1991, the city's name reverted to Bishkek. The climate is characterized by wide variations in temperatures. Summers are usually hot and dry, with an average temperature of 85°F (30°C). Winters can be cold, temperatures reaching -15°F (6°C). The population is approximately 700,000. Ethnic groups include:

Russian:	56 percent
Kyrgyz:	23 percent
Ukrainian:	6 percent
Tatars:	3 percent
Germans:	2 percent
Koreans:	2 percent

(Source: Information packets produced for Peace Corps trainees and Volunteers by the Kyrgyzstan Country Desk Unit and the country staff of Peace Corps/Kyrgyzstan.)

Understanding Characteristics of the Kyrgyz Population

Geography Standard: (9) The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

Objective:

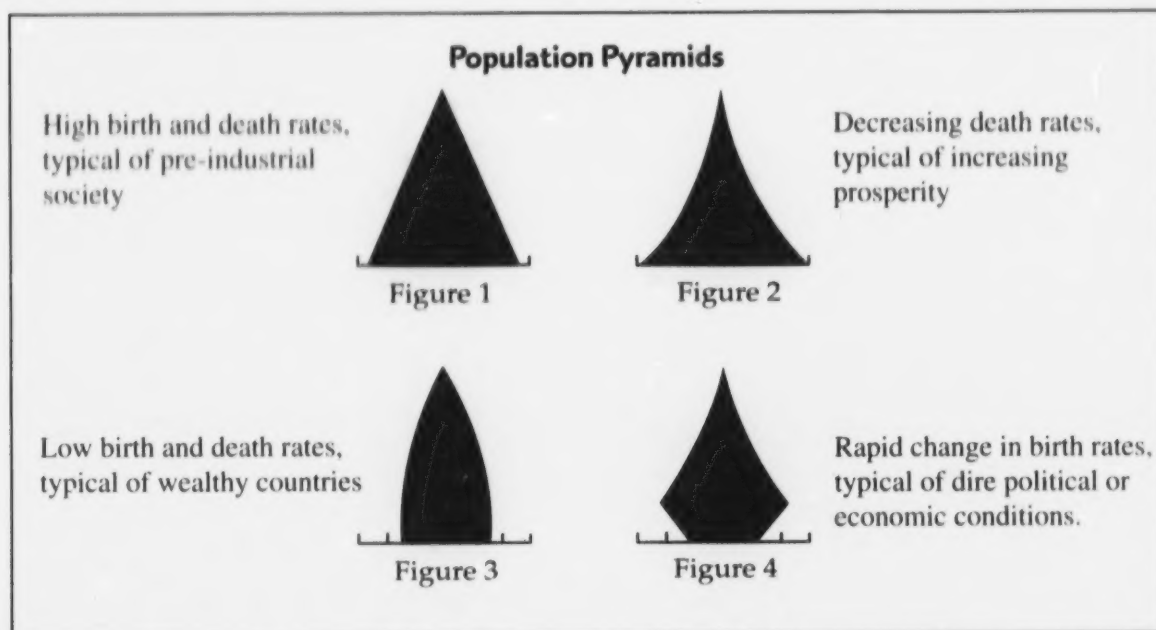
Students will create a population pyramid for Kyrgyzstan and analyze what it reveals about the country's population characteristics.

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "Understanding the Characteristics of the Kyrgyz Population" for each student
- Activity Sheet "Population Pyramid" for each student
- A World Almanac and other population data references

Background:

Population pyramids are a method to show the number of males and females in each age group, and they are useful in detecting some of the characteristics of a given population. Geographer David Lanegran points out that population graphs can reveal characteristics of a country. Kyrgyzstan's population pyramid most closely reflects Figure 1.



(Source: Lanegran, David A. and St. Peter, Patricia H., "The Geography of Eastern Europe," *Update*, National Geographic Society, Fall 1990.)

Teaching This Lesson

1. Talk about population pyramids and their uses. For example, a rapidly growing population with a large number of children under the age of 18 can expect to need more classrooms and schools. A population with a large number of senior citizens can expect to have higher costs for health care.
2. Share the information about population pyramids included in the background to this lesson, or make a copy of the background information for each student or group. Hand out the Activity Sheet "Understanding the Kyrgyz Population".
3. Assist students in creating a population pyramid using the data provided in "Understanding the Kyrgyz Population." Discuss the shape of the pyramid in relation to Lanegran's model provided in the background information.
4. Have students create a population pyramid for the U.S. or for your state. Compare this pyramid with Lanegran's model and with the Kyrgyz pyramid previously constructed. Discuss the differences and/or similarities in the pyramids, noting how each figure illustrates the status of the population it represents.
5. Discussion question: What are some key issues that the Kyrgyz government needs to address in order to deal with the population changes in the next decade? (Students will have various answers).

Extension Activity:

- Create a population pyramid for the population in your Peace Corps Volunteer's country. How does it compare with the Kyrgyzstan population pyramid?
- You may want to take this lesson one step further by encouraging students to complete research on the history and cultures of Kyrgyzstan and then discuss its demographic profile.



Understanding the Kyrgyz Population

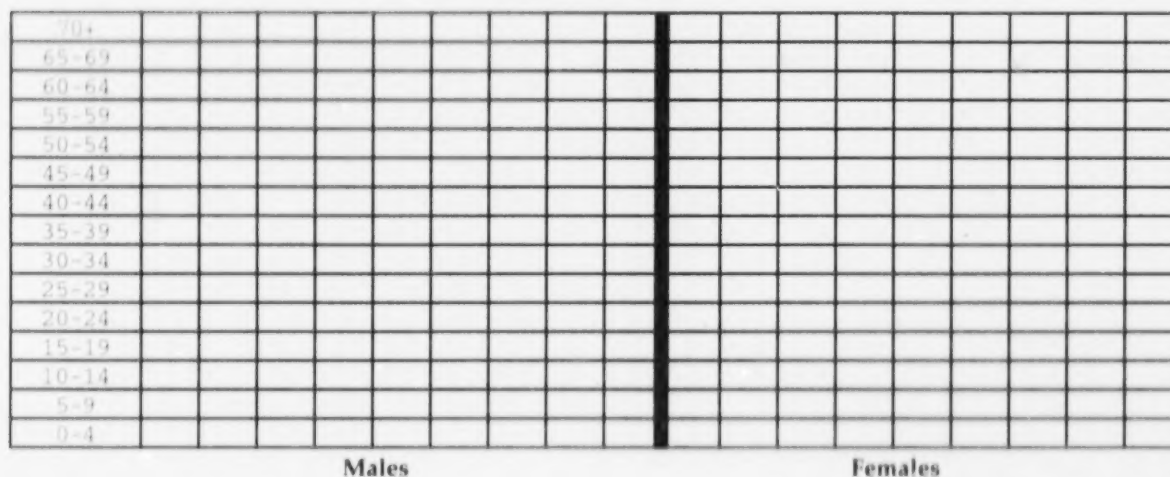
Kyrgyz Population By Age

Age	Males	Females	Total
0-4	7.4%	7.1%	14.5%
5-9	6.0%	5.9%	11.9%
10-14	5.6%	5.5%	11.1%
15-19	5.1%	5.1%	10.2%
20-24	4.7%	4.6%	9.3%
25-29	4.3%	4.0%	8.3%
30-34	3.4%	3.5%	6.9%
35-39	2.6%	2.7%	5.3%
40-44	1.2%	1.3%	2.5%
45-49	2.2%	2.3%	4.5%
50-54	1.8%	1.9%	3.7%
55-59	1.8%	2.1%	3.9%
60-64	1.1%	1.7%	2.8%
65-69	0.5%	1.1%	1.6%
70+	1.0%	2.5%	3.5%

(Source: Stephen K. Batalden and Sandra Batalden, *The Newly Independent States of Eurasia: Handbook of Former Soviet Republics*, 1993, Oryx Publications. [The statistics, however, are from the 1989 All-Union Census taken in the USSR.])



Population Pyramid



Create a population pyramid using the data from "Understanding the Kyrgyz Population." Let each square indicate 1 percent. Then answer these questions:

1. What conclusions can you draw about the Kyrgyz population? Is it growing rapidly or slowly?

2. Research population data for the U.S. and compare it with that of Kyrgyzstan. What are some of the factors that you think might contribute to these differences.

Islam in Kyrgyzstan

Geography Standard: (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Objective:

Students will learn about Islam and its influence on the culture of Kyrgyzstan.

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "Islam in Kyrgyzstan" for each student
- Activity Sheet "Islam as a World Religion" for each student

Background:

Like nearly 800 million people around the world, the majority of citizens in Kyrgyzstan (74 percent) are Muslims. This means they are believers in Islam, which literally means "submission to the will of Allah." Because of its isolation, Kyrgyzstan did not become Islamic until about the 14th century, more than 700 years after the death of Muhammad in 632 A.D. However, from the 14th century on, Islam has been an important part of Kyrgyz culture, and it is reflected in the art, writing, dress, and customs of the Kyrgyz people.

During the Soviet period from 1917 to 1991, all religion was suppressed. Since independence, there has been a resurgence of interest in religion, with the reopening and rebuilding of both mosques and churches. Today, Kyrgyzstan is a secular country - the government does not support one religion over another and there is freedom to worship.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Point out to students that Islam is one of the world's major religions. The other major world religions are Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. Hand out the Activity Sheet "Islam in Kyrgyzstan." Ask students to read it independently and then think about the questions at the end.

2. Discuss with students the basic tenets of Islam. Review the discussion questions on the reading:

When and how did Islam begin?

How do Muslims view Muhammad? How is it different from the way Christians view Jesus?

What is the holy book of Islam? What do Muslims believe are the origins of this holy book?

What are the most important beliefs of Islam?

Where is Islam a majority religion? (Have students do some research and point out the areas to the class on a world map.)

3. Pass out the Activity Sheet "Islam as a World Religion." Have students work in small groups to complete the answers to the questions they know. Then have them use reference books, the internet, or interviews with people who practice Islam to complete the chart. Have students present the information to the class.

Extension Activity

What is the major religion in your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country? Have students research and talk about the role and influence of religion in that country.

(Sources: El-Liwaru, Saidi J. and El-Liwaru, Maisha Zoja. *The Muslim Family Reader*. Indianapolis, Indiana: American Trust Publications, 1988. Embassy of Saudi Arabia, Islamic Affairs Department. *Islam: A Global Civilization*. Farah, Caesar E. *Islam: Beliefs and Observances*. New York: Barron's, 1994. *Introduction to the Arab World*, video and booklet. Washington, DC: Amideast, 1989. Lewis, Bernard. *The World of Islam: Faith, People, Culture*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1976. Lippman, Thomas W. *Understanding Islam: An Introduction to the Muslim World*. New York: Meridian Press, 1995. *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 1996 Edition, S.v.9 "Islam.")



Islam in Kyrgyzstan

Ash'hadu an la ilaha illa 'llah, wa ash'hadu anna Muhammadan rasulu 'llah. ("There is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is His prophet.") These words, called the *shahada*, are the first phrase a Muslim learns and the words Muslims pray throughout their lives.

History:

Muhammad was born in the city of Mecca in Arabia in 570 A.D. At that time, Arabs had many beliefs and many gods. In 610 A.D., when he was about 40, Muhammad received the first revelation to warn his people and call them to worship the one God. He taught that there is only one God, and that Muhammad was His messenger.

At first, the rich and powerful citizens of Mecca scorned Muhammad's teachings. Some even plotted to kill him. In 622, he fled to Medina, where he found followers. The emigration to Medina is called the *hejira* and Muslims date their calendar from this year. In 630, Muhammad returned to Mecca with his followers. They occupied the city and destroyed the idols in the shrine, the Kaaba, and turned it into a mosque. The citizens of Mecca then adopted Islam. Mecca and Medina became the sacred cities of Islam. After Muhammad's death in 632, the new Muslim leaders encouraged the spread of Islam. Within 100 years, Islam spread from Spain to India. Today, 800 million people, about one-fifth of the world's population practice Islam.

The Teachings of Islam:

Muslims respect the teachings of Moses and Jesus, whom they consider great prophets sent by Allah. They believe that Muhammad was the most recent and greatest of these prophets. Muhammad is not worshiped as divine. Muslims object when Westerners call Islam "Mohammedanism" and its followers "Mohammedans." They feel it gives the incorrect impression that Muslims worship Muhammad.

Muslims believe that God's message, as revealed to Muhammad, is found in the Koran, Islam's holy book. The Koran teaches that God is the creator of the world and controls everything in it. In Arabic, Muslim means "one who gives himself to God." Islam means "submission or obedience to Allah." The Koran is written and learned in Arabic and provides a complete guide for living for Muslims around the world.

The Five Pillars of Islam:

The Five Pillars of Islam are the basic duties of every Muslim. The first duty is *shahada* (profession of faith). Muslims declare their faith by saying, "There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is His messenger." Muslims believe that anyone can become a Muslim by sincerely and publicly reciting the *Shahada*.

The second duty is *salat* (prayer). Prayers are said five times a day. Muslims pray at morning, noon, afternoon, sunset, and night. Because of work and other obligations, many Muslims pray only in the morning and at sunset. In Islamic countries, the *mu'azzin* calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret, the tower that is part of every mosque.

The third duty is *zakat* (almsgiving). Muslims have a responsibility to help those in need. Islam teaches that giving to people in need is a tribute both to God and the dignity of all people, rich and poor.

The fourth duty is *sawm* (fasting). During the month of Ramadan, healthy Muslims must not eat or drink from dawn to dusk. Ramadan is the holiest month of the Muslim year. It is the month Muhammad began receiving the revelations from Allah that became the Koran. Muslims use a lunar calendar of 354 days, 12 months of 28-30 days each. Ramadan is the ninth month. Since the lunar year is shorter than a 365-day solar year, each year Ramadan occurs earlier in the Western calendar.

The fifth duty is *hajj* (pilgrimage). Muslims believe that they should make the *hajj* to Mecca at least once during their lifetime, if they are financially and physically able to do so. Women are not required to make the *hajj*, but many do.

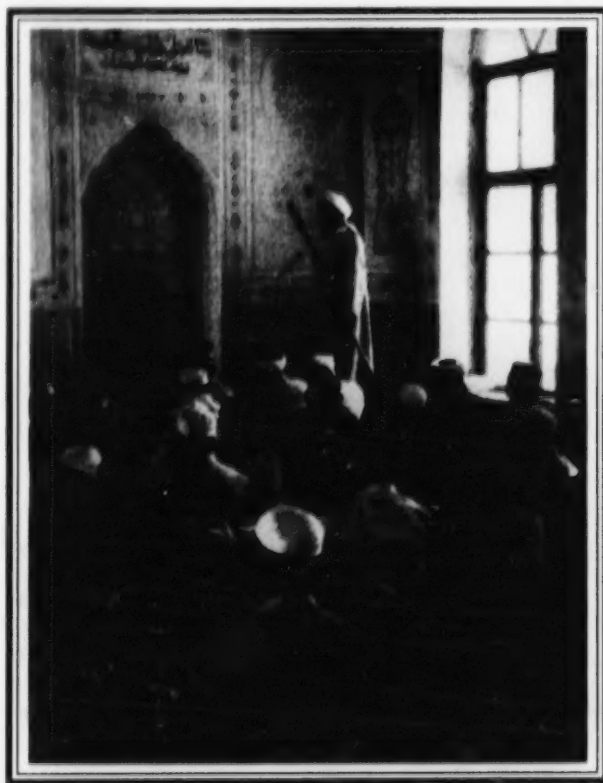
The Mosque:

A Muslim place of worship is called a mosque. It usually has a dome and a tower, called a minaret. As a sign of respect to God, Muslims perform ablutions (washing their head, hands, and feet) before entering the mosque, so there are usually wells or water taps available outside.

When Muslims pray, they touch the floor with their forehead. Because it is especially important to keep the floor clean, no one wearing shoes is allowed into a mosque. Clothes must be clean and modest and women must cover their hair with a scarf. Within the praying hall, there is a niche called the Mihrab. It points the direction that people should face (Mecca) when praying. Next to the Mihrab stands a high staircase, called the Mimbar. It is for speeches at Friday prayers.

Some questions to consider:

1. When and how did Islam begin?
2. How do Muslims view Muhammad? How is it different from the way Christians view Jesus?
3. What is the holy book of Islam? What do Muslims believe are the origins of this holy book?
4. What are the most important beliefs of Islam?
5. Where is Islam a majority religion?
6. If you had a Muslim friend, how could you show your respect for his or her religion during Ramadan?



Muslims worshipping inside a mosque in Jalal-Abad.

Islam as a World Religion

Compare the beliefs of Islam to other major world religions.
Start by filling in the information you already know,
then research other world religions and complete the remainder of the chart.



	Islam	Christianity	Judaism	Buddhism	Hinduism
Statement of faith					
Responsibilities toward others, and key duties					
Holy or special times of the year					
Holy places and their significance					
Locations where the religion is practiced					

Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan

Geography Standard: (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Objective:

- Students will identify hospitality as a cultural tradition of the Kyrgyz people.
- Students will compare hospitality in Kyrgyzstan to hospitality in the U.S.

Materials Needed:

- Activity Sheet "Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan" for each student

Background:

Hospitality is an important part of Kyrgyz culture. In the days when most Kyrgyz were nomads, hospitality was not only important, it was often a necessity. Travelers passing through might bring news, and provide help in times of trouble. When a family left their yurt, they would leave it open and leave food inside.

Today, the tradition of hospitality continues. Many families have a "Kyrgyz room" similar in appearance to a yurt. This room, decorated with felt rugs, is where guests are entertained. The seating arrangement in the Kyrgyz room - men on the left and women on the right - comes from the placement of cooking stove in the yurt.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Hand out a copy of the Activity Sheet "Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan" to each student. Assign students to read the sheet and answer the questions. (Students may want to look at the video "Destination: Kyrgyzstan" to review illustrations of hospitality).
2. Have students write a brief essay comparing a hospitality tradition in Kyrgyzstan with a hospitality tradition in the United States.

Extension Activity:

Research hospitality traditions in your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country.



Hospitality Traditions in Kyrgyzstan

Hospitality is an important part of Kyrgyz culture. In the days when most Kyrgyz were nomads, hospitality was more than important. It was often a necessity. Travelers passing through might bring news and provide help in times of trouble. Therefore, when a family left their yurt, they would leave it open and leave food inside.

The video "Destination: Kyrgyzstan" highlights the important Kyrgyz tradition of hospitality. Here are some excerpts from the script of the video. (Jack Hillmeyer and Michelle Haugh were Peace Corps Volunteers in Kyrgyzstan in 1995.)

Narrator:

"Part of the character of Jalal-Abad is found in the variety of foods here. Like the people, the foods have come from many different nations. Food isn't just something that people eat in Jalal-Abad. It's an important part of how they live and how they show their guests that they are welcome."

Michelle Haugh:

"People go out of their way to make someone feel welcome and they will lay a table with anything in their home just to make you know how important it is that you have come to them."

Jack Hillmeyer:

"The biggest custom that is Kyrgyz, has to do with going to somebody's house to be a guest. And it comes from their ancient traditions and customs when they were nomadic people. When they had yurtas out in the middle of a field, people would come by and after a long trip you must invite them in to sit and to eat and drink. And so it continues today. When you go into somebody's house, you must at least take some food and some drink, or else you will be offending them."

Narrator:

"Very few people here still live in yurtas today. But in some homes, there is a room called the Kyrgyz room, where families still honor their ancient traditions."

Jack:

"It is set up kind of like the traditional yurt. They sit on the floor because there was no furniture in the yurt when you moved it around. And so they always sat in a circle . . . the carpets are all made of wool. In the Kyrgyz yurt, when you walk in, it is round... on the right there is a kitchen and a small cooking place. That's usually where the women worked. The men sat on the left side. So even today, in the Kyrgyz room it is the tradition that men sit on the left and women sit on the right. Of all the people that I've ever met, anywhere in the world, I have never felt as at home as I have here with the Kyrgyz."

Questions:

Why was hospitality particularly important when the Kyrgyz were nomadic?

How have the traditions of hospitality continued in modern Kyrgyz homes?

Write a short essay comparing and contrasting a hospitality tradition in the U.S. and in Kyrgyzstan.

A family in Jalal-Abad eats their meal on a *surra*, a raised platform in their courtyard.





ACTIVITIES: GRADES 10-12

Kyrgyzstan's Transition from a Centrally-Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy

Geography Standard: (11) The patterns and networks of economic interdependence on Earth's surface.

Objectives:

Students will analyze economic issues in Kyrgyzstan from a spatial point of view.

Materials Needed:

- Classroom map of the world
- Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors
- Map 3 - Roads and Railroads
- Map 5 - Economic Map
- Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan's Transition From a Centrally-Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy" for each student

Background:

The shift to a market-driven economy has been difficult for Kyrgyzstan, as it has for other former Soviet republics.¹ Soon after independence, the Kyrgyz government launched an economic reform program. The goal was to move away from a centrally-planned economy to one in which economic decisions are determined primarily by market forces and consumer preferences. Among the steps the government took:

- Creating a Kyrgyz currency, the som, which gave the central bank some ability to stabilize their currency on the world market;
- Reducing the budget deficit so that the government needed to borrow less money;
- Allowing prices to rise to market levels;
- Privatizing all the businesses that were formerly owned by the government.

While all these economic actions hold out the promise that Kyrgyzstan will eventually develop a stable economy, the transition has not been easy for the average Kyrgyz citizen. Many factories have closed, some because the raw materials needed for production were now more expensive or not available at all; others because the equipment was so outdated and inefficient that the factory could not sell goods at competitive prices. As the factories closed, unemployment increased.

One of the country's most important natural resources are its rivers, which can be used to produce hydro-electric power. Kyrgyzstan currently exports about 30 percent of the electricity it produces to China and other nearby countries. This generates both revenues and hard currency. However, to take full advantage of this natural resource, the country will need to develop a network of electric lines in complicated and mountainous conditions.

Kyrgyzstan is the site of the former U.S.S.R.'s largest and most productive gold mine, and it also has significant deposits of rare strategic metals including cesium, yttrium, lanthanum, antimony, and mercury. Some experts believe that these minerals and metals may be the most promising sector of the Kyrgyz economy, but as is the case with virtually all of Kyrgyzstan's heavy industry, there is a need for significant investments to update machinery and equipment.

¹Apas Zhumagulov, "Potentials, Prospects, and Problems," in "Passport to Kyrgyzstan," special section in *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, p. 16.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Ask students to locate Kyrgyzstan on the world map. Talk about what your students already know about this newly-independent republic. Talk about what they know about the breakup of the former U.S.S.R.

2. Give each student a copy of the maps and the Activity Sheet "Kyrgyzstan's Transition From a Centrally-Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy."

3. Discuss the essay with students. Have them look at the economic data for 1994.

What statements can they make about the Kyrgyz economy in that year? (There was a sharp decline, 26.5 percent in the GDP. At the same time, inflation was rampant, with prices increasing 87 percent in one year.)

What has happened to the rate of increase in consumer prices? (It has slowed from 87 percent in 1994 to 8 percent) What does this mean for the typical Kyrgyz citizen? (It means that prices are stabilizing.)

What do the economic trends seem to indicate about the future of the Kyrgyz economy? (Students will have various answers.)

How has the transition to a market economy affected population movement in Kyrgyzstan? (It has led to the departure of highly skilled workers, many of whom are ethnic Russians. The departure of skilled workers in turn has created further economic problems.)

4. Ask your students to role-play the following situation: You are an economist advising the Kyrgyz government. You are recommending how to allocate an international loan of \$100 million. Assume that to fully fund any of the three choices listed below, it would require the entire loan. Students may give the entire \$100 million to one project. They may also divide it among the three. After they have made their choice, ask them to explain why. The choices are:

a. To build more power lines to China and Pakistan, both customers of Kyrgyz hydroelectric power. Kyrgyzstan has an abundance of hydroelectric power, but lacks the infrastructure needed to get this power to potential customers.

b. To modernize the equipment in several glass factories in Bishkek. This investment will allow these factories to operate more efficiently and hopefully make a profit. Currently, Kyrgyzstan exports about 107.6 million square feet (10 million square meters) of plate glass each year.

c. To improve the transportation system within the country. This investment would allow goods to enter and leave the country at a lower cost, thus reducing the cost of Kyrgyz goods.

5. On the basis of the information in the essay and any other research students may have done about Kyrgyzstan or other newly-independent republics, ask them to analyze each of these options, addressing advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Then present their recommendations to the class.



Kyrgyzstan's Transition From a Centrally- Planned Economy to a Market-Driven Economy

"The transition to a market economy is going on, very painfully for the society."

- Prime Minister Apas Zhumagulov

As a part of the U.S.S.R., Kyrgyzstan had a centrally-planned economy. There was essentially no private property, and both agricultural and industrial production was owned and run by the government. Instead of relying on supply and demand to determine what would be manufactured and at what cost, a government plan spelled out what would be produced, where it would be produced, and the price at which it would be sold.

The shift to a market-driven economy has been difficult for Kyrgyzstan, as it has for other former Soviet republics. Many factories closed, some because the raw materials needed for production were too expensive or not available at all; others because equipment was so outdated and inefficient that factories could not sell goods at competitive prices. As the factories closed, unemployment increased. (In the planned Soviet economy, full employment was guaranteed.) Writing in "Passport to the New World," an English-language Russian magazine, Prime Minister Apas Zhumagulov describes the transition to a market economy:

*"The transition to a market economy is going on, very painfully for the society, but we assume that the stable political situation in conjunction with decisive action in the economic field is bringing positive results. Our country has carried out this process in a more radical way enhanced by fundamental changes in the political structure of the society, democratic reforms such as the structuring of a multi-party system, the liberalization of the economy, the creation of a legal basis for free enterprise activities, and the accelerating of the process of privatization."*¹

As unemployment increased and the economy declined, people have had to develop other ways of earning a living. Several Peace Corps Volunteers described what they saw in 1995:

"Many people are out of work. Buying and selling seem to be the biggest businesses right now. Many people who were once factory workers now sell on the streets."

- John L. Meehan, Peace Corps Volunteer

"There is a little old lady (babushka)² I see now and then at the chopping block just outside the meat market. She's hunched down picking up tiny fragments of meat and pieces of bone with some marrow or meat still attached. Life here can be very hard. Pride keeps most people from begging, but not from doing the most menial jobs."

- Bill Heaphy, Peace Corps Volunteer

At the same time, many ethnic Russians were leaving the country. Between 1989 and 1993, approximately 15.6 percent of the country's Russian population emigrated to Russia. They took with them valuable professional and technological skills, leading to shortages of trained workers during the critical transition to a market economy in the following sectors: construction, machine building, electronics, defense, and cotton growing. Russians who have left say that among their reasons for emigrating was the law declaring Kyrgyz the state language, and their apprehension about increasing Islamic influence.

¹Apas Zhumagulov, "Potentials, Prospects and Problems," *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, p.16.

²Russian for "grandmother".



"Less than three years ago, heat and gas were a constant, and everybody's life was better, people constantly say to me with a sigh. They tell a different story than the images we have of oppressed babushkas shivering in the cold and eating crusts of bread. I have heard countless times from a wide variety of sources that 'everything used to be better.'"

- Eric Boyle, Peace Corps Volunteer

Soon after independence, the Kyrgyz government launched an economic reform program. The goal was to move away from a centrally-planned economy to one in which economic decisions are determined primarily by market forces and consumer preferences. The government implemented such measures as:

- Creating a Kyrgyz currency, the som, which gave the central bank some ability to stabilize their currency on the world market;
- Reducing the budget deficit so that the government needed to borrow less money;
- Allowing prices to rise to market levels;
- Declaring Russian as the official second state language;
- Privatizing all the businesses that were formerly owned by the government.

The development of a new currency highlighted some of the ethnic divisions that exist within the country. A majority of Kyrgyz supported the new currency, while a majority of ethnic Russians disapproved.

One of the country's most important natural resources are its rivers, which can be used to produce hydroelectric power. Kyrgyzstan currently exports about 30 percent of the electricity it produces to China and other nearby countries. This generates both revenues and hard currency. However, to take full advantage of this natural resource, the country will need to develop a network of electric lines in complicated and mountainous conditions. Zhamalbek Tuleverdiyev, president of the State Joint Stock Holding Power Company, estimated in 1994 that it would require at least \$4 billion to develop the country's hydroelectric power resources.³

Kyrgyzstan is the site of the former U.S.S.R.'s largest and most productive gold mine, and it also has significant deposits of rare strategic metals including cesium, yttrium, lanthanum, antimony, and mercury. Some experts believe that these minerals and metals may be the most promising sector of the Kyrgyz economy, but as is the case with virtually all of Kyrgyzstan's heavy industry, there is a need for significant investments to update machinery and equipment.

What has been the impact of the economic reforms? Study the economic indicators on the following page, and draw some conclusions.

³Zhamalbek Tuleverdiyev, "The Power Base of Kyrgyzstan," *Passport to the New World*, May-June 1994, p. 72.



Kyrgyzstan: Selected Economic Indicators

	1994	1995	1996*	1997*
Real GDP Growth	-26.5%	1.3%	2.4%	4.1%
Consumer Prices	87.2%	30.3%	15.1%	8.0%
Govt. budget as percentage of GDP	-8.0%	-11.3%	-5.5%	-3.7%

(Source: International Monetary Fund, Press Release, #95-64, December 11, 1995)

1. Look at the economic data for 1994. What statements can you make about the Kyrgyz economy in that year?
2. What has happened to the rate of increase in consumer prices? What does this mean for the typical Kyrgyz citizen?
3. What do the economic trends seem to indicate about the future of the Kyrgyz economy?
4. How has the transition to a market economy affected population movement in Kyrgyzstan? Why would making Russian an official language of Kyrgyzstan be considered an economic decision?
5. You are an economist advising the Kyrgyz government. You are recommending how to use an international loan of \$100 million. Assume that each of the following three choices would require the entire loan. The choices are these:
 - a. To build more power lines to China and Pakistan, both consumers of Kyrgyz hydroelectric power. The country currently exports about 30 percent of the electricity it produces to China and other nearby countries. This generates both revenues and hard currency. However, the country lacks the infrastructure needed to export more power to potential customers.
 - b. To modernize the equipment in several glass factories in Bishkek. This investment will allow these factories to operate more efficiently and hopefully make a profit. Currently, Kyrgyzstan exports about 107.6 million square feet (10 million square meters) of plate glass each year.
 - c. To improve the transportation system within the country. This investment would allow goods to enter and leave the country at a lower cost, thus reducing the cost of Kyrgyz goods.
6. On the basis of the information in this essay and any other research you do, analyze each of these options, addressing advantages and disadvantages of each approach. Then make your recommendation to the government.

(Sources: Annette Bohr and Simon Crisp, "Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz," in Graham Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, Longman Group, New York and London, 1996; Kathleen A. Scanlan, "Kyrgyzstan Offers a Wealth of Untapped Mineral Reserves," *Business America*, September 6, 1993, p. 5; "Kyrgyzstan: Introductory Survey," *The Europa World Year Book 1995*, London: Europa Publications, 1995.)

The Manas Poem

Geography Standard: (10) The characteristics, distribution, and complexity of Earth's cultural mosaics.

Objectives:

- Students will understand the importance of the epic poem Manas to the culture and values of Kyrgyz people.
- Students will analyze the Manas poem and poems of other countries, and be able to describe how the literature and arts of a country affect its sense of identity and values.

Materials Needed:

- Translations of epic poems from other cultures, e.g., Beowulf (Great Britain), The Song of Roland (France), Mahabhartar (Sri Lanka), El Cid (Spain), the Iliad and the Odyssey (Greece)
- Activity Sheet "The Manas Poem" for each student

Background:

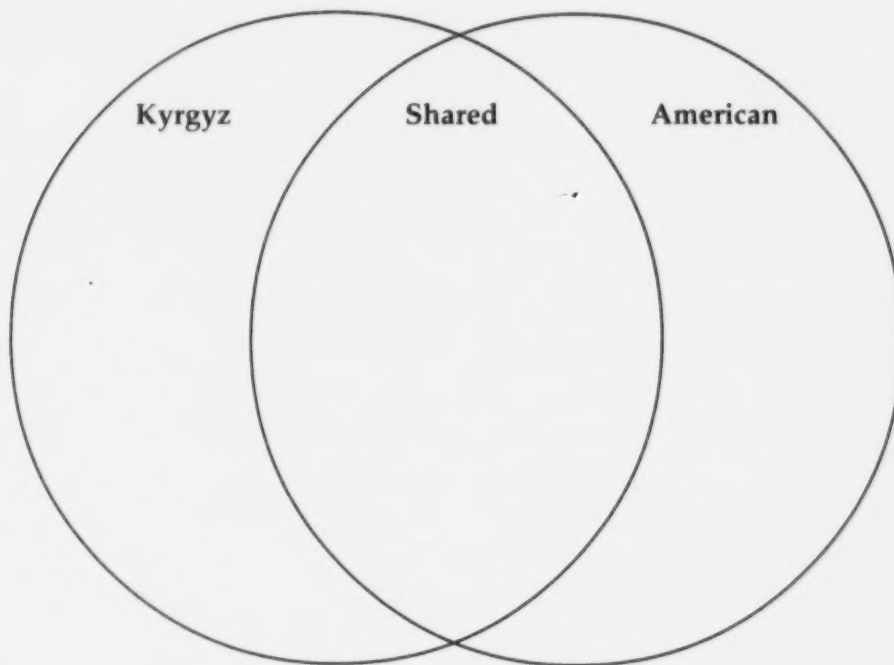
Throughout history, people have told tales about heroes. From Br'er Rabbit to Hercules, these mythical heroes have some things in common. The most famous Kyrgyz tale is the Manas epic. More than 1,000 years old, it tells the story of the nation's warrior-founder Manas, his son Semetey, and grandson Seytek. The themes of the poem are courage, the soldier's duty, and the love of the motherland. The poem has been especially important to the Kyrgyz people as they have struggled to preserve their identity as a nation. To outsiders, the poem is an excellent source of information about early Turco-Mongol culture.

The poem, more than half a million lines long, has been preserved by wandering bards known as Manas Chi. They memorized the poem and performed it anywhere groups of people were gathered together. Because the Kyrgyz language was not written, the Manas poem had an important role in preserving both the history and the culture of the Kyrgyz people. The most famous Manas Chi were able to perform the poem over a period of several days all from memory. For the Kyrgyz, the Manas and other songs and poems recited by the Manas Chi were their literature, history, and theater.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Explain to students that they will be reading excerpts from Manas, an epic poem of over 500,000 lines. Share the background information with students, or copy it and have them read it independently.
2. Explain to students that Manas is an epic poem. An epic poem is a long narrative, or story poem that tells about the formation of a people or a nation. It is centered around a hero and tells of his adventures and greatness. The earliest epic poems, like Manas, were formed from the various works of unknown poets. Among the best known of these are the Iliad and the Odyssey (attributed to Homer), the Anglo-Saxon Beowulf, the East Indian Mahabhartar, the Spanish El Cid, and the French Song of Roland.
3. Have students read the excerpts from Manas on the Activity Sheet. Ask what things seem to be important to Kyrgyz people. How would students describe the values of Kyrgyz people from what they have read in these excerpts? (A concrete way to do this is to ask students to complete these two sentences "We Kyrgyz see ourselves as _____" and "We Kyrgyz believe _____." For example, students might respond, "We Kyrgyz see ourselves as descendants from warriors." "We Kyrgyz see ourselves as many tribes made one.")
4. As is true for the Kyrgyz, all cultures have poems and songs that create a sense of history, national identity, and pride. Ask students to research and list five to ten American poems and songs that have helped create our sense of national identity. Have students bring in copies of each of these poems or songs and read them to the class.

Discuss the American heroes featured in the poems and songs. Why are they considered heroes? What American values are expressed in these poems and songs? How are American values the same or different from Kyrgyz values expressed in *Manas*? You may want to have students create a Venn diagram on the board by drawing two large circles that overlap (see the illustration). In one circle, list values and beliefs that seem to be uniquely Kyrgyz. In the other circle, list the uniquely American values and beliefs. In the area where the two circles overlap, list the values and beliefs that are shared by both cultures.



5. During the Soviet period, the government of the U.S.S.R. tried to suppress the telling and reading of *Manas*. Why might this have been done?

Extension Activity:

Write to your Peace Corps Volunteer. Ask if there are any stories, poems, or songs that help create the identity of the host country. If English translations are available, repeat this activity with the poems or songs of your Volunteer's host country.



The Manas Poem

*I gathered kites and turned them into hawks
I gathered slaves from different tribes and made them a nation*

Manas's Birth

*Membrane water ran fast
The baby's voice was heard!
He gave a butt to his mother's womb
And he was born
With his hands full of blood.*

Almambet's Meeting of Manas

*He is support for tunduk¹
If you set out, he is your friend
If you lose your way, he will help you
If you attack your enemy,
He is a tiger for you*

*He has wonderful traits of character
He is your loyal friend.
Almambet is coming nearer.
I see him.
His character, his menacing look
is like tiger's.*

Manas' Getting Married to Kanykei

*The girl Sanrabiga
the Khan's daughter
married Manas
the Khan of the Kara Kyrgyz.
The people knew, that
She became related with
the Khan family.
Slow-witted Kyrgyz could not
perceive her name correctly
later on therefore
She was given a new
name Kanykei.*

¹A hole in the upper part of a yurta



Kanykei

*Her waist is like young of camel's
The eyebrows are curved like chi²
She has a large forehead, black eyes
Her speech is sweet
Her back is sloping, her bosom is
like wild ram's.
She is white-faced, her eyes are
like young of camel's.
Her rosy face shines
Her slender waist sways.*

Kanykei Sees Off Manas to the Great Campaign

*Let good luck accompany you
in the campaign,
said Kanykei seeing off the strong man
40 fellow fighters, running
took out 40 last horses
31 beautiful girls carried
out bread and salt . . .
In how many months, how many
years will you come back?
We'll be waiting for you
believing that you'll have to
return in so many years.*

The Great Campaign

*The troops of the Kara Kyrgyz
joined battle
None of the fighting men turned back.
All of them joined battle together.
Remains of the houses formed
a mountain
The bodies of the people turned into a mountain.*



A statue of a Manas Chi
in Bishkek

²Steppe grass

A History of Kyrgyzstan

Geography Standards: (17) How to apply geography to interpret the past; (18) How to apply geography to interpret the present and plan for the future.

Objective:

Students will learn about key points in Kyrgyzstan's history and will relate them to major events in world history.

Materials Needed:

- Encyclopedias, history books, and computers that can provide access to the internet (if possible)
- Activity Sheet "A History of Kyrgyzstan" for each student (or students may work together)

Background:

Though Kyrgyzstan is an isolated country surrounded in many places with mountains that are as high as 20,000 feet, it has still been affected by the currents of history. Its location and mountain passes placed Kyrgyzstan on the overland trade routes between the East and the West. Since earliest times, Kyrgyzstan has been influenced by events in the rest of the world, particularly China, the Middle East and Europe.

However, the country's high mountains had a significant impact on its history by serving as a barrier that helped preserve traditional Kyrgyz culture. The country's first democratically elected president, Askar Akaev, wrote about the mountains in a 1994 essay entitled, "Kyrgyzstan on the Road to Democracy and Social Progress." "It was our mountains," he said, "that shielded my people in times of trial, and quenched their thirst by thousands of their rivers and springs, provided them with food, and filled them with faith in their strength, wisdom, and love of fellow-men."

Teaching this Lesson

1. Have students read through the time line and discuss it. One way of reviewing is to have one or two students "teach" the content in the time line to the rest of the class using their own words to describe each event.
2. Have students use encyclopedias, history books, and the internet to research what key events in the rest of the world affected Kyrgyzstan at each point on the time line. Assign small groups of students to be responsible for each time period.
3. When the research is complete, use student responses and fill in the top part of the time line.
4. Read students President Akaev's comments about the Kyrgyz mountains included in the background section of this lesson. Based on what they have learned from their research, do they agree or disagree? Can they make any predictions about the future of Kyrgyzstan?

Extension Activity:

- Research important events in the history of your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country. Add them to the time line.
- Change the time line to reflect a country you have already studied or are currently studying, and compare events that occurred there with Kyrgyzstan's history.



A History of Kyrgyzstan

800 to 900 A.D.

Events in Kyrgyz History: Members of 40 Turkic tribes began to identify themselves as Kyrgyz (which means "40 tribes"). They developed their own language and began to migrate toward the Tian Shan Mountains. Historical events were recorded in an epic poem about their great hero Manas.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

Mid-900s to 1100 A.D.

Events in Kyrgyz History: The Great Kyrgyz Khanate was created. It occupied a large area that included south Siberia, Mongolia, and what is now Kyrgyzstan. This is the classical period of Kyrgyz culture. The Silk Road, a network of overland trade routes, runs from China and India to the West. Some of these routes pass through Kyrgyzstan.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1200 - 1400

Events in Kyrgyz History: The beginning of Mongol rule. Although leaders continued to fight for independence, Kyrgyz statehood was lost.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1400 - 1700

Events in Kyrgyz History: Kyrgyzstan was ruled by various Khans, some of whom were Kyrgyz. The vast majority of ethnic Kyrgyz were nomads, practicing transhumance and raising sheep and horses. In the second half of the 17th century, many Kyrgyz converted to Islam.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1700 - 1876

Events in Kyrgyz History: The Kokand Khanate ruled Kyrgyzstan. During this period, many settlements, including Bishkek and Tokmak, were built.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

**1876**

Events in Kyrgyz History: Russian troops defeated the Kokand Khanate and occupied northern Kyrgyzstan. The country became a protectorate of Tsarist Russia. As part of the Russian government's official policy, thousands of Russian and Ukrainian settlers moved into Kyrgyzstan, especially in the north. They started farming, which reduced the land available for the Kyrgyz nomads.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1916

Events in Kyrgyz History: The Kyrgyz people rebelled against the Tsarist army, but they were defeated. When Russia became Communist in 1917, the new government instituted many policies that went against traditional Kyrgyz beliefs: atheism, communal land ownership, and the emancipation of women. Armed Muslim rebels continued to struggle against the government throughout the 1920s.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1926

Events in Kyrgyz History: Kyrgyzstan became an autonomous republic within the Russian Republic. The capital city of Bishkek was renamed Frunze, after Mikhail Frunze, Lenin's student and a local hero of the Russian Revolution.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1930s

Events in Kyrgyz History: Stalin attempted to end the Kyrgyz nomadic way of life and move all Kyrgyz people onto collective (state-owned) farms. Kyrgyz herders responded by taking their livestock deep into the mountains, as far as China.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

**1936**

Events in Kyrgyz History: Kyrgyzstan became a Soviet Socialist Republic, a full member of the U.S.S.R. For the first time in more than two centuries, the overwhelming majority of ethnic Kyrgyz were united into a single political unit. Ethnic Russians migrated to the area in large numbers, and Frunze (now Bishkek) became a predominantly Russian city.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1953

Events in Kyrgyz History: A Soviet campaign against the epic poetry of Soviet republics (including the Manas poem) was widely resisted by the Kyrgyz.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1989

Events in Kyrgyz History: Kyrgyz replaced Russian as the official language.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1990

Events in Kyrgyz History: The Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan declared its independence. The country was renamed the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1991

Events in Kyrgyz History: The city of Frunze was renamed Bishkek, the traditional name. The constitution of the new republic was adopted. In an early draft, there had been a requirement that the president must be ethnically Kyrgyz, however, the provision was eliminated in the final version. Nevertheless, the constitution does require that the president speak Kyrgyz. Leaders of five Central Asian republics (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) agreed to join the Commonwealth of Independent States, effectively dissolving the old U.S.S.R.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

**1992**

Events in Kyrgyz History: After visiting Switzerland, President Akaev commented:

"Fate has determined us to be a new Switzerland in Central Asia. There is every chance for this in the third millennium. Negotiations to attract investments and technology will soon bring results. . . . But the most important thing is that Switzerland has a position of permanent neutrality. Our initial experience shows that the political position of our republic is creating all the conditions necessary to acquire the status of permanent neutrality."

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1993

Events in Kyrgyz History: The country's name was changed from the Republic of Kyrgyzstan to Kyrgyzstan. The country introduced its own currency, the som. Between 1989 and 1993, approximately 15.6 percent of the country's Russian population emigrated to Russia.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

1994

Events in Kyrgyz History: Russian became a second official language. The republic will be officially bilingual until January 1, 2005.

Events in World History: _____

Events in North American History: _____

Vocabulary

Khan - A chieftain or an important person in India and some Central Asian countries.

Khanate - The area ruled by a khan.

protectorate - A nation that is protected, and partly controlled, by a stronger nation.

(Sources: Annette Bohr and Simon Crisp, "Kyrgyzstan and the Kyrgyz," in Graham Smith, ed., *The Nationalities Question in the Post-Soviet States*, Longman Publishers, New York and London, 1996; Ian Pryde, "Kyrgyzstan: Secularism vs. Islam," *World Today*, vol. 48, November 1992; Eugene Huskey, "Kyrgyzstan," Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, 1995.)

Destination: Kyrgyzstan

Geography Standard: (4) The physical and human characteristics of places.

Objective:

Students will plan a trip from their hometown to Kyrgyzstan. **Note: Students will view the video as part of this lesson.*

Materials You Will Need:

- Map 2 - Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors
- The World Wise Schools video "Destination: Kyrgyzstan"
- Activity Sheet "Destination: Kyrgyzstan" for each student
- Research materials and, if possible, a computer providing access to the internet

Background:

Kyrgyzstan is a nation rich in culture and filled with natural beauty. As the country moves toward a market economy, it has made efforts to increase tourism.

Teaching This Lesson

1. Hand out Map 2 to each student. Based on what students know about neighboring countries, ask them to make predictions about what they think they will see in the video. What might the land look like? What kinds of people do they think they will see? What do they expect each of the cities to look like?
2. Show the video "Destination: Kyrgyzstan." Then discuss how the things they saw did or did not align with their predictions.
3. Hand out the Activity Sheet "Destination: Kyrgyzstan." Have students work in small groups to plan a trip to Kyrgyzstan. They can use the resources in this study guide as well as information they find in guide books, travel books, and on the internet. Have them present their itinerary to the class.
4. Some students may want to prepare a travel poster promoting travel to Kyrgyzstan.

Extension Activity:

Develop the itinerary for a trip to your Peace Corps Volunteer's host country.



Destination: Kyrgyzstan

Plan a trip to Kyrgyzstan. Make sure you have answers to the following questions:

- How will you travel from your city to Kyrgyzstan?
- What connections will you need to make?
- How long will the trip take?
- What will airfare cost?
- What travel documents do you need to travel to Kyrgyzstan?
- When you get to Kyrgyzstan, what will be your itinerary?
- What are the things you most want to see?
- What currency will you use?
- How will you compute the exchange rate of your money?



A Kyrgyz man stands before the Tian Shan mountains.

Map 1 The World

Kyrgyzstan

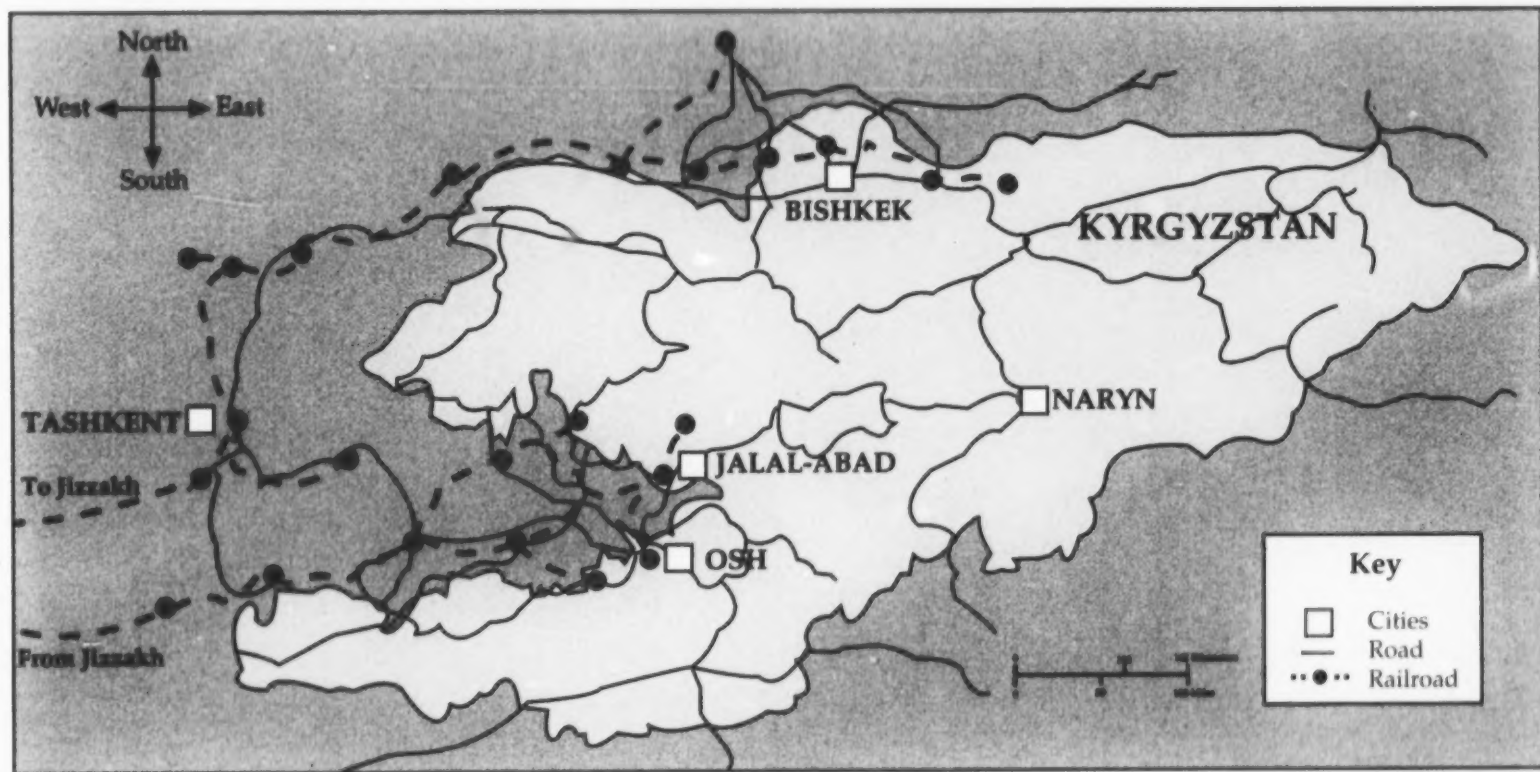


Map provided courtesy of National Geographic Society, 1996.

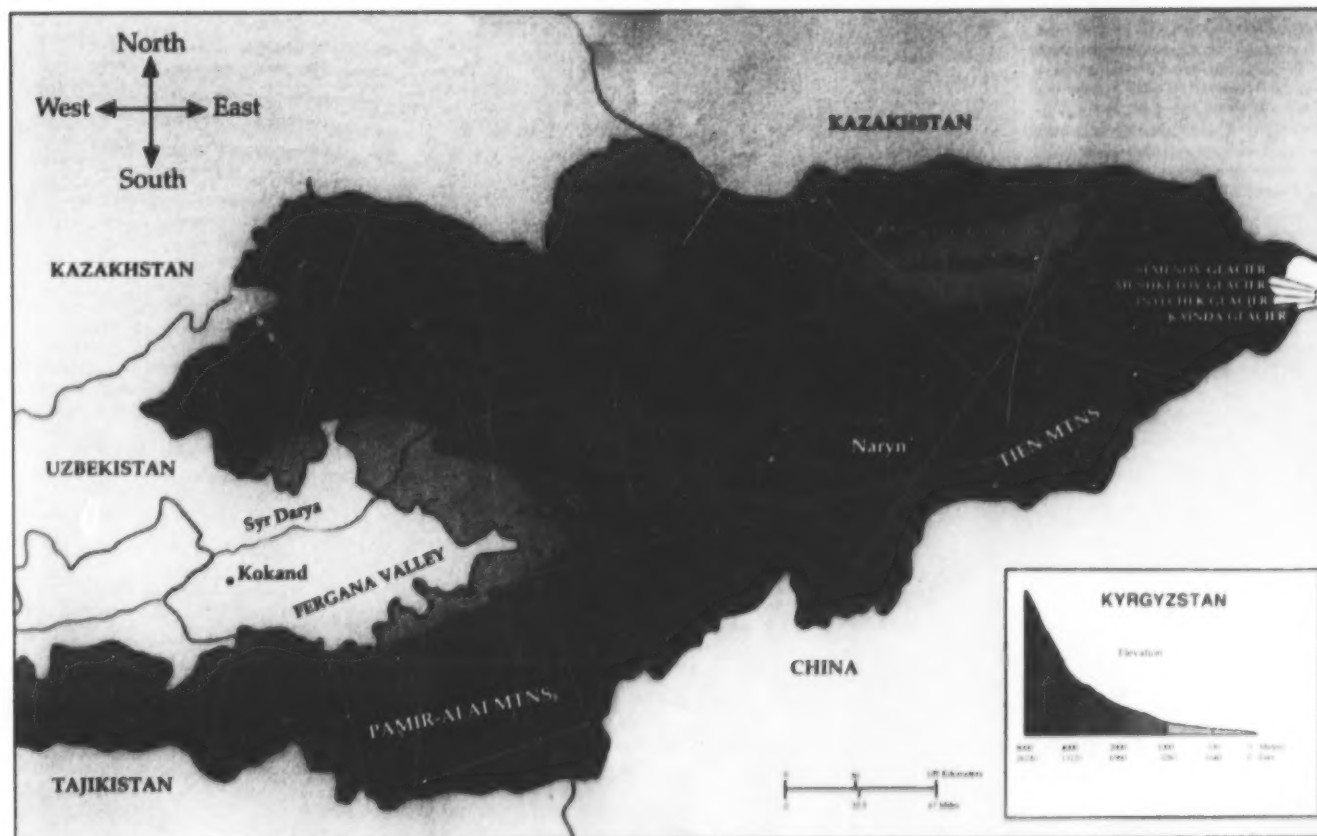
Map 2 Kyrgyzstan and Its Neighbors



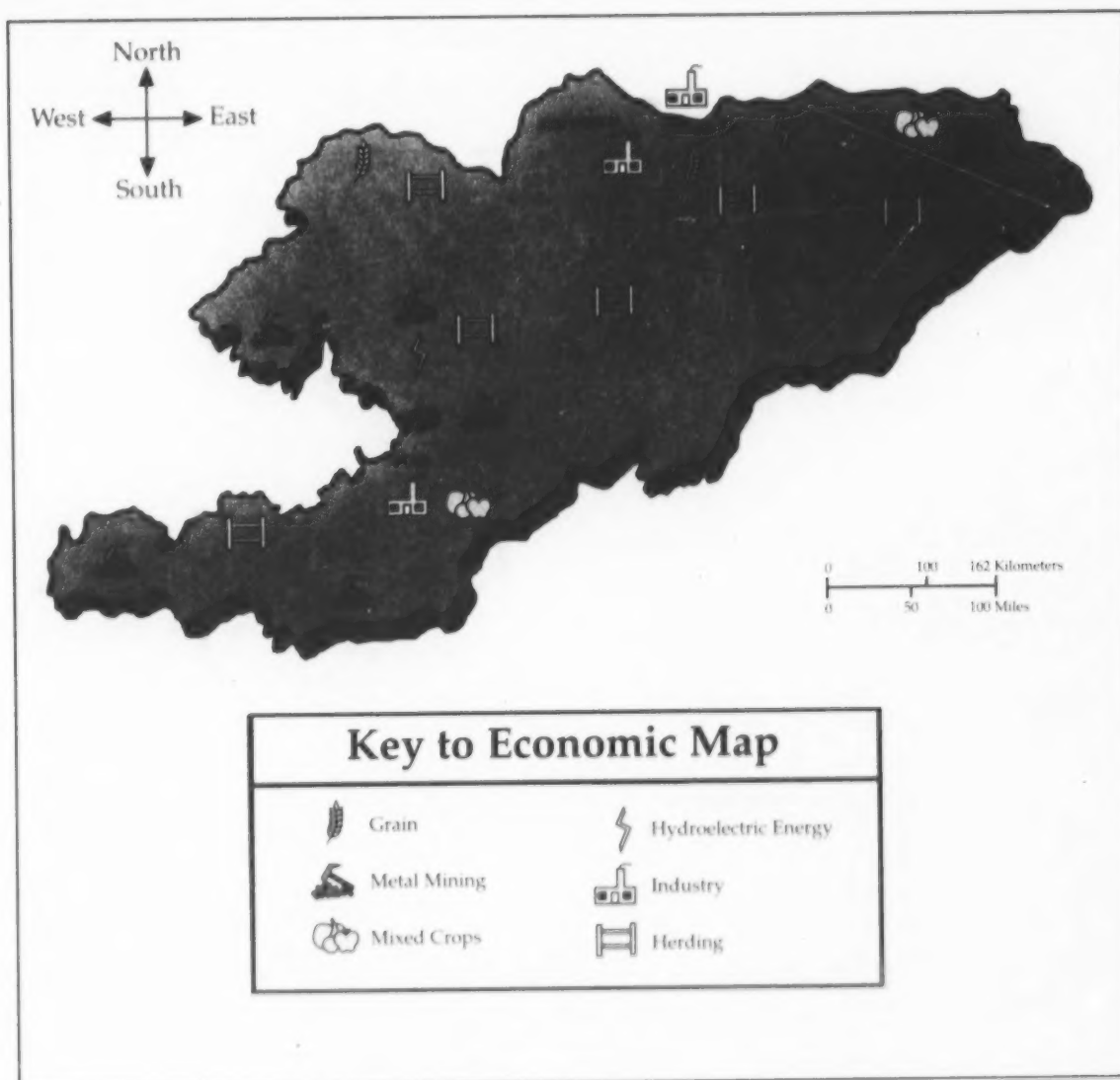
Map 3 Roads & Railroads



Map 4 Topographic Map

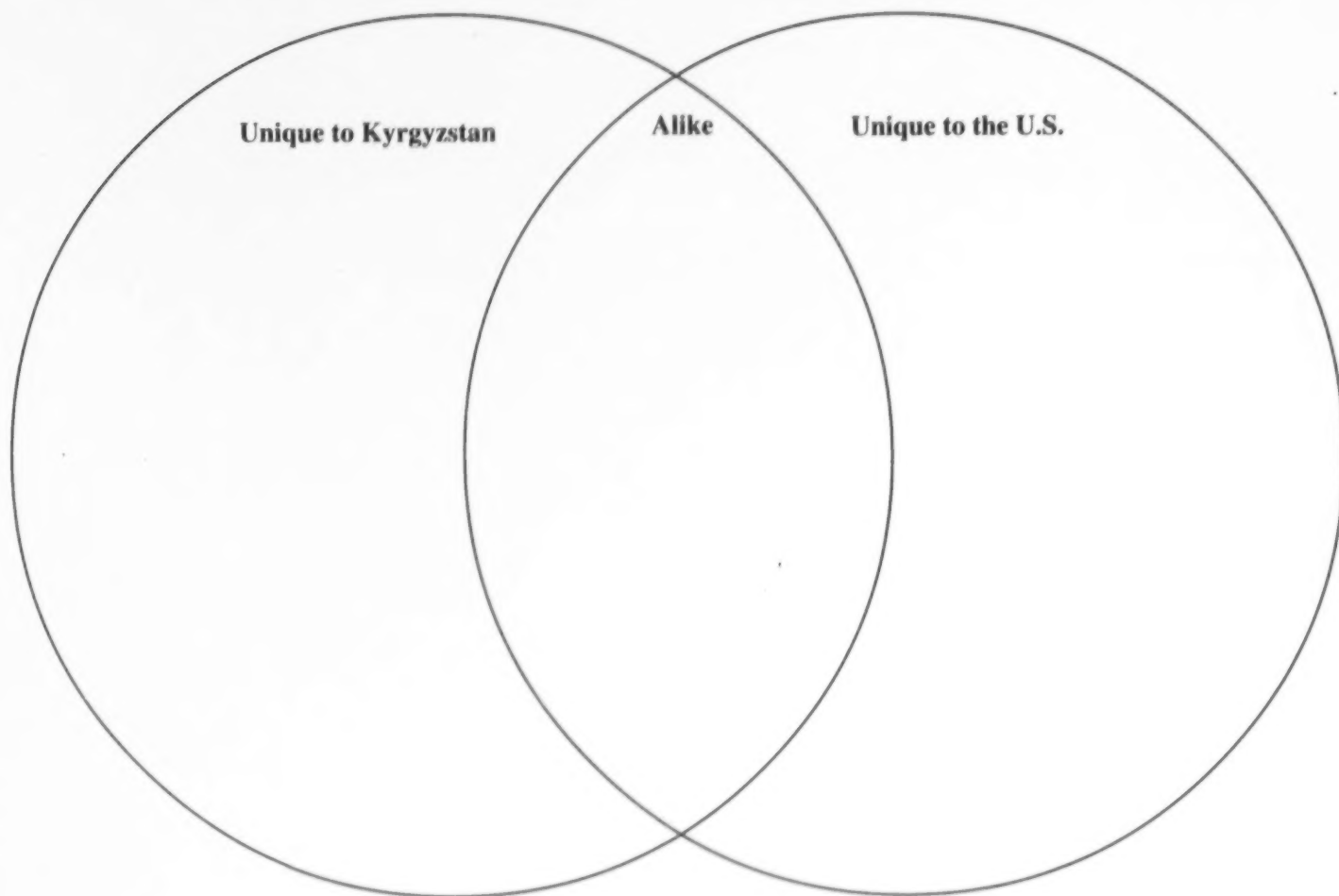


Map 5 Economic Map



Economic map by J. Michael Roy from the book "Kyrgyzstan."
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Life in Kyrgyzstan and Life in the U.S.





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85